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# DISCOURSE

CONCERNING

## Publick Prayer;

SHEWING,

That a Set-Form or *Liturgy* of Prayers

Is Expedient

In the *publick Worship* of God.

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By *W. Irwin.*

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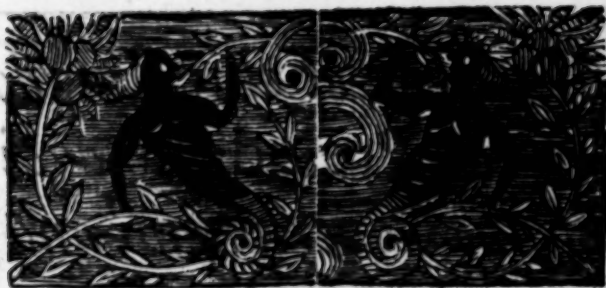
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T O T H E  
R E A D E R .

**I** Have for several Years past in a great Measure made it my Business, to be acquainted with the Controversy between the Establish'd Church and the Protestant Dissenters. And having carefully weigh'd and considered all the Arguments that are generally made Use of on both Sides, And narrowly enquired into the Principles and Practises of the Dissenters,  
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## To the Reader.

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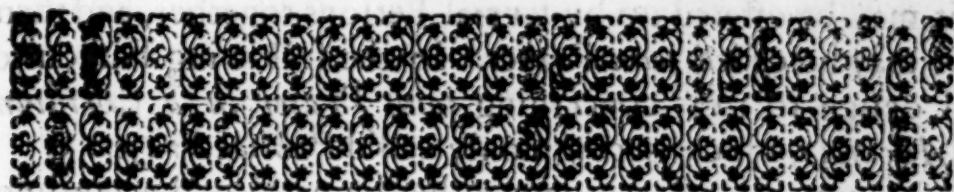
(especially ~~those~~ of this Kingdom) and their several Prejudices against the Worship, the Government, and the Discipline of our Church; I have resolved (God willing) to handle that Controversy distinctly in every Branch of it. The Materials for that Purpose I have already by me: But have not yet fitted any Thing for the Press except the following Discourse concerning publick Prayer; which because it will be introductory to my Design in general, and may as I hope be useful, I present to the Reader.

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### ERRATA.

P<sup>age</sup> 8. l. 11. read of. p. 17 l. 10. r. Materials. p. 21. l. 2. for into read so. p. 27. l. 24. r. Grasshoppers. p. 29. l. 26. for into read so. p. 91. l. 30 read Creeds. p. 93. l. 13. for but read out. p. 96. l. 30. r. than p. 99. l. 16 dele be.

The



## The Introduction.

**P** RAYER *strictly* speaking is the *Asking of something from God* : But 'tis commonly taken in a *larger sense*, according to which it do's include the following Acts or Parts of Worship, *viz.* The Asking of good Things from God, which is commonly call'd *Petition*; The Praying against evil Things, which is usually call'd *Deprecation*; The Praying unto God for others, which is call'd *Intercession*; The Acknowledging of our Sins unto God, which is commonly call'd *Confession*; The Declaring and Setting forth of the Perfections and Works of God, which is called *Praise*; And the Rend'ring unto God our humble and hearty Thanks for His Mercies to our Selves or to others, which is called *Thanksgiving*.

And indeed, all these Parts or Acts of Worship are generally so *intermix'd* or interwoven, that it seems requisite there shou'd be *one common Name* whereby to express them.

B

Prayer



Prayer may be offer'd unto GOD, either by *one Person*, and then it may be call'd *Private* or *Solitary* Prayer: Or it may be offered up by several Persons together, and then it may be called *joint* Prayer. In the following Discourse I design to treat concerning *joint Prayer in a Christian Assembly*, which is commonly call'd *Publick Prayer*.

Now publick Prayer may either be perform'd according to a *set Form and Rule* or *Liturgy*, That is, *When the Matter the Words the Method and Order and the Circumstances of Prayer are expresly and particularly prescrib'd both to the Minister and to the Congregation*. And this way of Prayer is used in the publick Worship of our *Church*.

Or it may be perform'd in a *free way*, that is, *When the Minister does not Pray according to a set Form or Liturgy, but according to his own Ability and Discretion, And the Congregation joins with him*. And this way of Prayer is used in the publick Worship of the *Dissenters*.

This *general Description* of both ways of Prayer may serve in this place; since I shall have Occasion in the following Discourse more particularly to shew the nature of *each* of them:

I think it is *now* no matter of Debate between us and the *Dissenters*, *whether it be lawful to Pray by a set Form?*

But,

1. 'Tis a Controversy between Us *Whether a set Form or Liturgy of Prayers be expedient in the publick Worship?* for this we hold in the Affirmative: And 'tis plain from their practice that they deny it. For if they did believe that a *Liturgy* of Prayers were expedient, 'tis to be presumed that they would Themselves make use of one. But I think 'tis granted on all Hands that they don't make Use of one in any of their Congregations. 2. Sup-



2. Supposing they cou'd be wrought upon to allow that a Set-Form is expedient in the Publick Worship, yet there may still remain a Controversy between us, *Whether Free Prayer be not also in some measure expedient in the publick Worship?* Or *Whether* (over and besides the constant Use of a Set-Form) every Minister ought not to be left at Liberty to pray in some Cases according to his own Ability and Discretion?

3. 'Tis likewise a Controversy between us, *Whether one Set-Form or Liturgy of Prayers may lawfully be imposed upon all the Ministers and Congregations in a Nation or National Church?* For this I think they have always deny'd. And on the contrary we affirm that such an Imposition is not only lawful but expedient.

I shall begin with and at present confine my self to the Consideration of the first of these Controversies. For I judge it to be of the greatest Importance. And besides, the setting of it in a clear Light will have a considerable Influence upon the other two.

I am therefore in this Discourse to prove, that *A Set-Form or Liturgy of Prayers is expedient in the publick Worship.*

Now a Thing is said to be expedient in the publick Worship, when it is necessary or instrumentally useful to wards the better Performance of any Duty that God has commanded in Order to the publick Worship. And therefore if it can be made to appear, that the Duty of publick Prayer can be better perform'd if we pray by a Set-Form or Liturgy, than if we should pray without one, or pray altogether in the free Way, Then it must be allow'd

that

that a Set-Form or *Liturgy* of Prayers is *expedient* in the Publick Worship.

Now the Duty of publick Prayer will be the best perform'd, when the Laws or Rules that God has given us concerning it are the best observed. And that *these* Laws or Rules can be the best observed by us when we pray by a Set-Form, Or that *they* can be better observed by us when we pray by a Set-Form than when we pray without one, or pray altogether in the *free* Way, I shall endeavour to shew in the following Discourse.

Now the Laws or Rules that God has given us concerning publick Prayer, are such as are either *expressly* contain'd in Holy Scripture, or may be drawn from it by good and necessary *Consequence*. And both of these Kinds I conceive may be reduced to the following Heads, *Viz.*

1. *The publick Prayers as to the Matter of them ought to be lawful or agreeable to the Will of God.*
2. *They ought as to the Matter of them to be compleat.*
3. *They ought to be fitly and decently express'd.*
4. *Publick Prayer ought to be perform'd in right Method and Order.*
5. *Publick Prayer in a Christian Congregation must be directed to the blessed Trinity in Unity.*
6. *It must be presented unto God through Christ the Mediator.*
7. *Publick Prayer ought to be perform'd with a suitable and becoming Gesture and Behaviour of the Body.*
8. *Prayer in Publick ought to be frequently and constantly kept up.*

9. *The*

9. *The Congregation Assembled ought to joyn in the publick Prayers with Devotion, or with a suitable Temper and Frame of the Mind.*

10. *Publick Prayer ought in general to be so perform'd as that it may be useful towards the Instruction of People in the Duties and Principles of the Christian Religion.*

These I think are the *principal Rules or Directions* God has given us concerning publick Prayer. And I shall not stand here to prove them from Holy Scripture ; Because I am sensible that they will *in general* be all acknowledged by the *Dissenters*.

If any shall *say*, that besides *these*, there are also other Rules concerning Publick Prayer ; I answer, That whatever other Rules of this Nature there may be imagined, they are either reducible to some of these that have been already mentioned, Or else the same kind of Arguments that shall be made use of in the following Discourse, will prove that *they also* can be better observ'd by us, when we Pray by a Set-Form, than when we Pray altogether in the *free Way*.

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A Discourse concerning Publick

# PRAYER.

## SECT. I.

*Concerning the First Rule laid down in the Introduction, viz. That the publick Prayers as to the Matter of them ought to be lawful or agreeable to the Will of GOD.*

**I**N speaking concerning this Rule I shall shew  
First, *That a Set-Form is the most safe and the most likely and probable way in Order to observe it.*

Secondly, I shall further shew *That by the Use of a Set-Form it can always (or at every Time of publick Worship) be sufficiently observed in every Congregation; But that it cannot always be sufficiently observed in every Congregation, or indeed in any Congregation, when we pray altogether in the Free-Way. And,*

I. *A Set-Form is the most safe and the most likely and probable Way in Order to observe the Rule now under Consideration.*

That

That this may be made to appear it must be considered that there are *certain Means and Helps*, Some of which are necessary, and others very useful in Order to observe *this Rule*; Or in Order to the publick Prayers being lawful or agreeable to the Will of God as to the *Matter* of them. Now if Set-Forms have the Advantage of *free Prayers* in Respect of *these Means and Helps*, Or if more of the Benefit of them can be had in the Contriving of Set-Forms than can be ordinarily had in the making of *free Prayers*, Then it must be allowed that a Set-Form is the most Safe and the most likely and probable Way in Order to observe the Rule in Hand. But 'tis manifest that Set-Forms have the Advantage of free Prayers in Respect of *these Means and Helps*, Or that more of the Benefit of *them* can be had in the Contriving of Set Forms than can be ordinarily had in the making of free Prayers, As will appear if we distinctly consider them. And

First, In Order to the publick Prayers being lawful or agreeable to the Will of God in Respect of the *Matter* it is necessary or requisite *That the Person that contrives them be one that is duly qualified*: That is, He ought to be a Person of *Honesty and Integrity*, And one that has a *sound Judgment and Understanding*, And all other *Personal Abilities* that may be ordinarily requisite for such an Undertaking. This I am sensible will be allow'd; and therefore I shall not stand to prove it.

Now 'tis evident that Set-Forms have the Advantage in Respect of all Means and Helps of this Nature: Since the Forms that may be used in all Congregations may be drawn up by persons that are in all Respects the best qualify'd. And it may reasonably be presum'd, that the Church will

will only employ such Men in a Work of such a Nature. But *free* Prayers must be made by every private Teacher: And the Constitution of the World is such, that notwithstanding all the Care that can be taken in admitting Men into the Ministry, The Generality of private Teachers can be but of *indifferent Judgments and Understandings*, and but indifferently qualified in *other* Respects.

2. 'Tis also requisite in this Case, *That the Persons that compose the publick Prayers, be in a right Disposition of Body and Mind, at the Time when they are engag'd in that Work.* This as I conceive cannot be denied. For considering the many Infirmities and Accidents that necessarily attend humane Nature, it is certain that Men cannot be fit at all Times *rightly* to contrive Prayers for the publick Use. We see from *Experience* that Men are not at all Times fit *rightly* to discharge any other Duty, as for Example, to *Preach* or *Write*: And there can be no Reason assign'd why the Case should be *otherwise* in the contriving of Prayers for the publick Use. And surely the *Dissenters* cannot but know from their own Experience, that upon Account of the *various Indispositions* that their Ministers are liable unto, their Prayers must at *sometimes* be *less* perfect, or *less agreeable* to the Laws of God, than they are at *other Times*.

Now 'tis plain that Set-Forms have the *Advantage* in Respect of all Means and Helps of this Kind. Since the Forms that may be used in every Congregation, may be such as were framed by Persons when they were in the best and fittest Disposition of Body and Mind for such an Undertaking. Whereas *free* Prayers must frequently be made by Men when they may be in *several Respects* *in-*  
D \* *disposed*



*disposed* both in Body and Mind; As for Instance, When they may be under *Temptations*, Or more than ordinarily subject to humane *Passions* and *Infirmities*, Or much encumbered with *Business* and the *Cares* of Life.

3. *Diligence and Care must be used in the contriving of the publick Prayers*, Otherwise it cannot be ordinarily expected that *they* should be free from Errors and Corruptions in the *Matter*. This I am sensible will be *also* granted. For doubtless through *Carelesness* and *Negligence* a Man may err in those Prayers that he contrives, as well in Respect of the *Matter*, as of the *Words* or *Method* of them.

Now there can be much more Care taken in the contriving of a *Set Form* than can be ordinarily taken in the making of *free* Prayers. For there may be all the Care imaginable taken in the Composure of a Set-Form. Several *Years* may be spent in the Drawing of it up. And the Care and Experience of several *Ages* may be had about it. But *free* Prayers must be made by every private Minister: And the *Generality* of private Teachers by Reason of their *Passions* and *Corruptions*, cannot but be supposed to be frequently liable to *Carelesness* in the premeditating or contriving of their Prayers: Nay the most industrious and diligent of them may *some times* be negligent in this Affair. Besides, 'Tis not to be doubted but that the *free* Prayers of the *Dissenters* are generally speaking in a *great Measure*, if not *some times altogether* conceived of a *sudden* without fore-thought or premeditation. Upon which Account it is that *they have* been generally called by the name of EXTEMPORE Prayers.



I may further add, That private Ministers by Reason of the *Hurry* of Business, and the many *Diversions* that they may be engaged in cannot possibly have that *Time* and *Leisure* in the Contriving of their *free* Prayers that may be had in the drawing up of Set-Forms. Considering especially, that when they pray in publick in the *free* or *Extempore* Way, they must generally make Prayers five or six Times a *Week*, and such too as must be of a very considerable *Length*, And that must besides, to gratifie the Humour of People, be in some Measure continually new.

4. For the Purpose in Hand it may be necessary, or at least very useful, That the Person who contrives the publick Prayers should consult and have the Advice of other Persons about them before they are offered unto God in the publick. For we see from Experience that in all other Cases Men do receive considerable Benefit by Advising and Consulting with Others; And do thereby avoid many Faults that otherwise they might fall into. And I should think that the *Dissenters* cannot but own, that if their Ministers did advise with sober and judicious Persons about their Prayers before they utter'd them in Publick, they would be more free from Errors and Imperfections than now commonly they are.

Now 'tis plain that Set-Forms have the Advantage of *Extempore* Prayers in this Respect. For when a Person that is duly qualified has drawn up a Set-Form, he may advise and consult about it with the most sober, learned and judicious Persons, Nay with Men of all Ranks and Degrees whatsoever, before it is used in the publick Worship.

But

But on the other Hand, as has been already taken Notice of, *free or Extempore Prayers* must, in Order to please the People, be in *some Measure* continually *new*; And *besides*, as has been likewise already hinted, such Prayers are generally speaking in a great Measure *unpremeditated*, or conceived of a sudden without Fore-thought, and consequently are not ordinarily committed to *Writing*: And upon these Accounts it cannot generally be expected, that those Persons that make or contrive *them*, should consult with others about *them*, before *they* are offered unto God in the publick Worship.

And indeed, tho' the *Dissenters* when they make any *Address* to the Prince take great Care in consulting with one another in Order to have the *Matter* of it *proper* and *fit*; and tho' when any of them does *write* any Thing in their own Defence or against the Church, he will not fail to advise with others about it; Tho' they consulted one another in their Drawing up a *Confession* of Faith, a *Larger* and *Shorter Catechism*, and a *Directory* for publick Worship; Tho' they will ask the Advice of Others about the Sense of this or that *Text* or *Passage* of Scripture, About the Truth of this or that particular *Doctrine* or *Opinion*, or about this or that *Case of Conscience*, &c. Yet I profess I could never yet learn that any Man among them did ever *ordinarily*, or indeed at *any Time* advise with any Person about his Prayers before he utter'd them in the publick Worship.

5. That the Prayers that are contriv'd for the publick Use may be lawful and proper with respect to the *Matter*, it will be of considerable Use to *have them approved of by a general Synod or Convocation*, before they are offered unto God in the publick Worship.

And

And this the Council of *Milvus* were very sensible of when they decreed *That the Prayers that were approv'd of by the Council should be used by all; And that no other should be said in the Church but those that had been weigh'd by the more judicious, or approved of in a Synod, least any Thing either through Ignorance or Negligence might be done against the Faith.*

The *Jews* also were apprehensive of the same Thing. For *Mr. Selden* has observ'd from the antient Customs and Records of the *Jewish Nation* *That certain Forms of Prayer were instituted by Ezra and his Consistory, to the end that the Jews might not recede either in the Matter or Expression of their Prayers from that Form of Piety commanded them by God.*

And even the *Heathens* seem to have had this in their View. For we find that *Plato* commanded *That whatever Prayers or Hymns the Poets compos'd unto the gods, they should first shew them to the Priests before they publish'd them, least they should ask evil Things instead of good.*

And certainly a Prayer that passes the Scrutiny, and has the Approbation of a Synod or Convocation, may generally speaking be more safely depended on for the Soundness and Orthodoxy of the Matter of it, than the private Conceptions or sudden Effusions of every ordinary Teacher. For in such Assemblies Things may be sufficiently canvass'd and weigh'd before they be approv'd of: And what may be Wanting in the Abilities or Experience of one Man may be supplied by those of another. And I should think the *Dissenters* cannot but own, *That if no Prayers were used in their Congregations but such as were approv'd of by their Synods or Presbyteries their publick*



Prayers would generally speaking be more free from Errors and Corruptions than *now* they are.

Now a Set-Form may be approved of by a *Synod* or *Convocation* before it be used in the publick Worship. Whereas *free* Prayers are the *private* Conceptions or *sudden* Effusions of *particular Men* that have not the publick Approbation of the Church to recommend them.

6. The last Help in this Case that I shall take Notice of is the *Assistance of God's Spirit*. Now as I shall shew there can be more of the Assistance of God's Spirit had in the Contriving of a Set-Form than can be ordinarily had in the making a *free* or *Extempore* Prayers.

In Order to this

We may remark that in the Composing of Prayers for the publick Worship the Spirit of God may assist us in *several Respects*. As for Instance, He may assist us in the making of them *lawful* and *proper* with respect to the *Matter*, In making of them *compleat*, In the digesting of them into right *Method* and *Order*, In the *expressing* of them in a decent and proper Manner, &c. And it is concerning the Influence that he may have upon us in the *first* of these Cases that we are here *principally* concern'd.

We may further observe that in the Performing of any Christian Duty we cannot *now* expect that the Spirit of God should assist us in an *extraordinary Way*, that is, by an *extraordinary* and *immediate Impulse*. And thus for Instance, it is incumbent upon the Ministers of CHRIST To *preach*, To *explain* the *Scriptures*, To *confute* and *convince Heretics* and *Opposers* of the Truth, and consequently



quently upon Occasion to *Write Books* in order to convince and convince them. And God has promised the assistance of his Spirit in the Discharging of *these* as well as of all other Christian Duties. But notwithstanding this Promise we are not now to expect that the Spirit of God shou'd by an immediate Impulse, or by Way of immediate Inspiration dictate to us the *Matter* the *Words* and the *Method* of our Sermons, our *Expositions* of Scripture, our *Disputations* with Hereticks, or those *Discourses* that we may publish in Order to convince them.

In like manner God has promised us the Assistance of his Spirit in our Contriving of Prayers for the publick Worship. But notwithstanding this Promise we are not now to expect that the Spirit of God should by an *immediate* and *extraordinary Impulse* dictate to us the *Matter*, the *Words*, or the *Method* of our Prayers. For there is no Promise in Holy Scripture for such an immediate and extraordinary Assistance of the Spirit in Prayer any more than in the forementioned Duties of Preaching, Explaining the Scriptures, Confuting of Gainsayers, &c.

We may further remark that we have as *great Promises* in Holy Scripture of the Assistance of God's Spirit in performing the now mention'd or the like Duties, as in the making of Prayers for the publick Use. For is not Christ said to be *the true Light which lighteth every Man that cometh into the World*? (a) Did not he command his Disciples to *go and teach all Nations*, telling them withal, *That he would always be with them even unto the End of the World*? (b) Has not he promised to send us the Com-

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(a) *Joh. 1. 9.* (b) *Mat. 28 20.*

forter that will teach us all Things, And guide us into all Truth? (c) Are not we told That the Manifestation of the Spirit is given to every Man to profit withal; That to one is given by the Spirit the Word of Wisdom, To another the Word of Knowledge, To another Faith by the same Spirit, To another Prophecy? &c. (d) Is it not said by Saint John, But the Anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you; And ye need not that any Man teach you; But as the same Anointing teacheth you of all Things, and is Truth, and is no Lye; And even as it hath Taught you, Ye shall abide in him? (e) Now are not these and the like Promises of the Assistance of God's Spirit as great as any Promises that can be produced in Relation to the making of Prayers for the publick Worship?

We may further observe that those *Outward* and *Moral Means* and *Helps* that are necessary or requisite in Order to the right Performance of any Christian Duty, Are also ordinarily necessary or requisite in Order to our Attaining the Assistance of God's Spirit in the Performing of that Duty. And thus for Instance The Spirit of God may assist Men in the writing of Discourses in Order to convince Hereticks and Opposers of the Truth. But Men are not *ordinarily* to expect that the Spirit of God will enable them to write agreeably to his Mind and Will unless, for Instance, they be Persons of *Sound Judgments* and *Understandings*, And tollerably acquainted with *humane Learning*, Unless they carefully *peruse* the Holy Scriptures, And honestly endeavour to find out the true meaning and Sense of them, Unless they *apply* themselves with Di-

(c) Job. 14. 26. and 16. 13. (d) 1 Cor. 12. 7, 8, 9. (e) 1 Job. 2. 27.

ligence to study upon *what* they are to write, And *advise* with sober and judicious Persons about it, &c.

I shall only once more remark, That ordinarily Speaking GOD does give us in the discharging of our Duties the Assistance of his Spirit in a *due Proportion* to the several *Degrees* that we have or enjoy of those *External* and *Moral* Means and Helps; And that when most of the Benefit of *them* can be had, then ordinarily speaking most of the Assistance of his Spirit may be expected. And thus for Instance, A Man that is eminent, for his *Piety*, his *Learning* and *Judgment*, his *Diligence* and *Experience* has much better Ground to expect that the Spirit of GOD will enable him to Preach or Write agreeably to the Mind of GOD than another Person may have that has but very indifferent Degrees of *these Qualifications*.

And therefore (that I may come *directly* to the Matter in Hand) In the *making of the publick Prayers lawful or agreeable to the Will of God as to the Matter*, there may be *most* of the Assistance of GOD's Spirit ordinarily expected when there may be had *most* of the Benefit of those *external and moral Means and Helps* that are necessary or useful for that Purpose. That is for Instance; *When the Person that contrives the Prayers is the best qualified in all Respects, And when in the Contriving of them he is in the best Disposition of Body and Mind for such a Work, When the greatest Diligence and Care is used in the Composure of them, When most of the wholesome Advice and Direction of others is had about them, And when they are the best approv'd of by the Body of the Governours and Pastors of the Church.* Now I have already shewn that Set-Forms have the Advantage of *free Prayers* in *every one of these*

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*Respects.*



*Respects.* And therefore there may be more of the Assistance of God's Spirit ordinarily expected in the Contriving of Set-Forms than in the making of *free* Prayers.

Upon the whole therefore 'tis plain, that in the Composing of Set-Forms there can be had more of the Benefit of those Means and Helps that are necessary or useful in Order to the publick Prayers being Lawful or agreeable to the Mind of God in Respect of the Matter, than can be ordinarily had in the making of *free* or *Extempore* Prayers. For *whatever* other ordinary Means or Helps of this Nature there may be imagined, They are either reducible to some of these that have been already mentioned, Or else the same Kind of Reasons that have been made Use of will prove that as to them also Set-Forms have the Advantage. And consequently a Set-Form is the most Safe and the most likely and probable (or the best) Way in Order to observe the Rule now under Consideration.

I proceed further to shew,

II. *That by the Use of a Set-Form the Rule in Hand can be always (or at every Time of publick Worship) sufficiently observ'd in every Congregation; But that it cannot be always sufficiently observed in every Congregation, or indeed in any Congregation, when we pray altogether in the free or Extempore Way.* And,

First, 'Tis plain that the Rule in Hand *can be always sufficiently observ'd in every Congregation by the Use of a Set-Form.* For 'tis manifest there may be a Form drawn up wherein there are no *positive Errors* or *Corruptions* as to the



the Matter. And I think that Form used in our Church is *unexceptionable* in this Respect. For the *Dissenters* have never yet made it to appear that there is one Fault of this Nature in it.

I presume it will be allowed that 'tis possible to make a *free* or *Extempore* Prayer wherein there is nothing as to the Matter that is *unwarrantable* or *repugnant* to the Word of GOD. And consequently it must also be granted that there may be made *such* a Form; Since such a *free* Prayer may be turned into a Form; And since *free* Prayers have no Advantages in Order to their being perfect in this Respect but what, as has been already shewn, Set-Forms have in a much greater Degree.

In a Word, if the *Dissenters* wont allow that 'tis possible to compose a Form that is sufficiently free from Corruptions of this Kind, they must at the same time be obliged to confess that 'tis impossible for any Man that is not immediately inspired to make a Prayer unto GOD at *any Time* without running into *positive* Errors and Corruptions in it. But this I am confident they will never say.

Now when such a Form is drawn up, it may be Establish'd by Law: And all the Ministers in a Nation may be oblig'd to make use of it. And upon a Supposition that they do constantly use it, and make use of no Prayers in the publick Worship but those that are contain'd in it, the publick Prayers in all Congregations will be constantly lawful or free from *positive* Errors and Corruptions in *Respect* of the Matter of them. But,

*Secondly*, 'Tis plain that the Rule in Hand cannot be always sufficiently observ'd in every Congregation, or indeed

*in any Congregation when we pray altogether in the free or Extempore Way.*

In Order to *this* we must remark that when Men pray altogether in the *free* or *Extempore* Way they have no certain *Draught* of the *Matter* of Prayer prescribed unto them; But are left at Liberty to use such Matter in their Prayers as they in their *private Judgment* shall think to be fit and convenient, or agreeable to the Law of God. Now when Men are thus left to their *free Choice* it cannot possibly be expected that their Prayers should be *constantly* free from Errors and Corruptions. For 'tis plain that in such a Case Men cannot but frequently transgress when they are under the following Disadvantages, *viz.* *When they have not a sufficient Degree of sound Knowledge and Judgment, When they have not a due Government over their Passions, When they are not in a fit Disposition of Body and Mind when they do contrive and make their Prayers, When they don't take sufficient Care in the Contriving of them, When they never advise with other Persons about them, When in the Contriving of them they are not assisted by the Spirit of God, Or are not sufficiently armed against the Devil's Temptations.*

Now 'tis manifest that all Ministers (as the present Condition of the World is) must be *more or less* subject to each of these Disadvantages. That is, They are all more or less liable to *Weakness* and *Error* in Judgment, To *sinful Passions* and *Affections*, To *Indispositions* in Body and Mind, To *carelesness* and *negligence*, They have not always the *Assistance* of God's Spirit, nor are they always *sufficiently armed against the Devil's Temptations.*

And

And therefore 'tis manifest that *all Men* must of Necessity run more or less into Errors and Corruptions in their Prayers if they pray altogether in the *free* or *Extempore* Way.

We see from *Experience* that through the aforesaid Disadvantages Men do frequently transgress in all Cases that are of a *parallel Nature*. I mean in all Cases wherein they may miscarry through the said Disadvantages. Thus it is evident that even the *best* of Ministers, but especially the *Generality* and more *indifferent* sort of them, must unavoidably upon these Accounts run more or less into Errors and Mistakes in their *free* or *Extempore Sermons*, Their *Expositions of Scripture*, Their *Writings* upon Controversy, And in all their other *ordinary Ways* of Action that are of a parallel Nature. Now if in such Cases *Errors* and *Mistakes* cannot possibly be constantly avoided by them, no more can *they* constantly be avoided in their *free* or *Extempore* Prayers. This Consequence must of Necessity be allow'd by the *Dissenters*, unless they cou'd prove that all Ministers must have some *extraordinary* and *infallible Assurances* of the Spirit of God in their Making of Prayers that they have not in any other Case. But this they will never be able to do.

I shall for the Illustration of this Argument point at *several* of the Ways whereby Men may err in their *free* or *Extempore* Prayers upon Account of the aforesaid Disadvantages. But I shall wave the giving of *particular Instances*; since 'tis so plain from the Reason of the Thing that Men must frequently err in this Case; And since any discerning Person, if he has either had the Occasion frequently to hear such Prayers, Or if he will be at the Pains



to get a considerable Number of them taken in *Writing* as they drop from the Persons Mouths that make them, may be furnish'd with Instances enough of this Kind.

And thus how frequently may Men err in their *Extempore* Prayers through *Weakness* and *Error* in Judgment? May they not thereby be sometimes in danger of *Asking Evil Things* instead of good, And of praying *against good Things* instead of *Evil*? And how readily may they pray for such good Things, and against such evil Things, as cannot be *fitly* or perhaps *lawfully* insisted on in the publick Worship? How forward may they be to introduce their *Errors* or *private Opinions* into their Prayers; Especially when it is so customary among those that pray in the *Extempore* Way to convert their Sermons into Prayers? How frequently may they *misapply Texts of Scripture*, when it is so usual to bring in Scripture Phrases at every Turn in such Prayers? How often may they *confess Sins not fit* to be confess'd? And may they not be sometimes in Danger of *Ascribing unto God evil Actions* or *Worships*? And of *Thanking him* for such Things as are rather *Evils* unto Mankind than the Blessings of God unto them? And how readily may they thank God for such *particular Mercies* as are not *fit* to be insisted on in the publick Worship?

And how ready may Men be to err in this Respect through *sinful Passions* and *Affections*? As for Example, Through *Pride* and *Vain-Glory* they may launch out extravagantly into the Commendation of their Sect. Through *Malice* and *Faction* they may vent the *Uncharitableness* of their narrow Spirits; And run out into *Invectives* against all that are any way opposite to their Party, or their Persons.



sons. Through *Affectation of Novelty* they may introduce very many impertinent Things into their Prayers. For if we have never oftner than once the same Things in our Prayers we shall soon have nothing at all to pray for: And therefore those that aim at *continual Novelty*, or at any *unreasonable Degree* thereof, must frequently corrupt their Prayers with unlawful or unsuitable Matter. Further,

How frequently may Men err in this Case through *Negligence and want of Care*? For Example, When at any Time they have not studied before Hand *sufficient Materials* for their Prayers, They will often be ready to enlarge too much on those that are *at Hand*, and in such Enlargements to have several unfit and impertinent Things. And when they are at a *Loss* or their *Memories fail them*, They will be ready to insert in their Prayers such Notions or Thoughts as may come into their Heads in the mean Time, which may happen very often to be unfit and Impertinent, because they may be raw and Indigested.

And when they are *careless about the Words* of their Prayers it will have a considerable Influence upon the Matter of them. For the Matter of Prayer is signified or conveyed to the People by the Words. And therefore if a Man's Words do not convey to the Congregation that Matter which is *fit*, but such Matter as may be *unlawful* or *impertinent*, his Prayer may justly be look'd upon as faulty in Respect of the Matter of it. Now that those who pray in the *Extempore* Way are very liable to be careless about their Words, is but too manifest.

Men will be also ready to commit Faults and Blunders through Carelessness and Inadvertency at the very Time when they are uttering their Prayers. For doubtless Men are frequently

frequently liable to Wandring and Inadvertency when they pray in the *Extempore* Way. And in such Cases there mult frequently drop from them such Things as they themselves would wish recall'd as soon as they perceive them. That I may only give one Instance more,

How frequently may Men err in this Respect through the *Temptation of the Devil*? For the Devil has so many V Ways to tempt Men to corrupt their *Extempore* Prayers, that he cannot *generally* miss of his Aim in some Degree or other. Thus for Instance; If a Man be *heavy in Constitution*, how easily may he be tempted to be careless and negligent in the premeditating of his Prayers? and then he will fall into Mistakes and Errors of Course. If he be *erroneous in his Judgment*, how easily may he be tempted to insert his Errors into his Prayers? If he be *conceited*, to fill them with vain and useles Fancies? If he be *zealous for a Party or Sect*, To stuff them with those Notions and Opinions that serve to distinguish his Way or Religion from that of other Men? If his *Head be dark and intricate*, to accustom himself to obscure and mystical Notions? And if he be *melancholly or disturb'd in his Brain*, to vent every crude and indigested Thing that comes into his Head, under Colour of following the Impulses of the Spirit?

I could have instanced in *several other* ways whereby Men may err in the Matter of their *Extempore* Prayers. But I presume there has been enough said to convince the Reader, that Faults or Corruptions of this Nature cannot but frequently happen in such Prayers. And I don't question but that the *Dissenters* themselves are convinced of it from their own *Experience*. Though the great Admirers of the *Extempore* Way may generally be sup-

supposed to be so byas'd and prejudic'd in their Opinions about it, That they *cannot* and *will not* see very many or the greater Part of the Corruptions which do attend it.

And now upon the whole, all Things fairly weigh'd and consider'd, I presume 'tis evident to the Reader, that the *First* Rule laid down in the *Introduction*, viz. *That the publick Prayers as to the Matter of them ought to be lawful or agreeable to the Will of God*, can be better observed by the Use of a Set-Form, than it can be by the Use of *free* or *Extempore* Prayer.

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## SECT. II.

*Concerning the Second Rule laid down in the Introduction, viz. That the publick Prayers as to the Matter of them ought to be compleat.*

In speaking to this Rule,

**I** Might *first* shew at large, by Arguments insisted on in the *first* Section, That a *Set-Form* is the *most safe, and the most likely and probable Way in Order to observe it*. But it will be needless to make particular Application of each of these Arguments to the Matter in Hand. The Reader, if he thinks fit, may readily do it in his own Mind.

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II. 'Tis plain *that by the use of Set-Forms the Rule in Hand can always* (or at every Time of publick Worship) *be sufficiently observed in every Congregation.* For,

*First,* 'Tis manifest that there may be a Set-Form or Liturgy drawn up, wherein all the *ordinary Matter* of publick Prayer may be sufficiently comprehended or descended into. And I think that the *Liturgy* of our Church cannot justly be excepted against in this Respect. For 'tis plain that the Prayers that are appointed in it, to be used upon every *ordinary Occasion* of publick Worship, are sufficiently comprehensive and compleat. I shall particularly instance in those Forms that are appointed for the *ordinary Service* upon the *Lord's-Day* in the *Morning*.

Now 'tis plain that in *that Service all the Parts* of Prayer are comprehended. For *therein* we meet with *Petitions* for good Things, *Deprecations* against evil Things, *Confession* of Sin, *Intercession* for Others, *Praises*, and *Thanksgivings*.

And every one of these Parts is sufficiently comprehensive and compleat. Thus for instance, We do not only, in that excellent Form, Pray to GOD *in general* That he wou'd give us Grace *to perform our Duty*, and *to avoid Sin*; But we also pray that GOD wou'd enable us, *to perform the several Kinds of Duty*, And *to avoid the several Kinds of Sin*; And that in as particular a manner as is ordinarily necessary or requisite in the publick Worship. For tho' every *particular Duty*, and every *particular Sin* be not expressly named in that Form; Yet *Duty* and *Sin* are distributed in it into certain plain and familiar *Heads*, unto which every particular Duty and Sin are plainly reducible,  
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And which by their being mentioned will naturally enough suggest every Man's particular Duty and Sin into his Mind. Thus for *Example*, The *Ten Commandments* are generally known to be a *Summary* of the *Heads* of our Duty; And after the Reading of every one of them in our publick Worship, every Man do's Pray with his Voice, *Lord have Mercy upon us, and incline our Hearts to keep this Law.* Now in such a Case, however the Duty or the Sin that he may in a particular manner be concern'd in, may not be expressly named; yet it may be sufficiently inculcated to his Mind. As for instance, When we Pray after the Reading of the *Seventh* Commandment against the Sin of *Adultery*. If a Person has been guilty of *Fornication*, his Sin will be thereby sufficiently suggested to him. In a Word, there is no *particular Duty* or *Sin whatsoever*, that any Person may be concern'd in, but what may be brought sufficiently unto his Thoughts by some Passage or other in that Form, either in the *Litany*, or at the Reading of the *Ten Commandments*, or in some other *Parts* of the Service.

It would be tedious to shew the *Particularity* of that *Form* as to every one of the *Parts* of Prayer. It may suffice in the *general* to observe, that in it we distinctly pray, for the several Kinds of *good Things*, And *against* the several Kinds of *Evil*, That we distinctly pray for the several *Ranks* and *Degrees* of Men, That we distinctly celebrate the several *Kinds* of the *Divine Perfections* and *Works*, And bless GOD for the several *Kinds* of his *Mercies* to our selves and to others. And for the Reader's Satisfaction herein, I refer him to the careful Perusal of the *Litany*, and *Collects*, and other *Prayers*, And of the *Psalms*  
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and *Hymns* that are appointed in our *Liturgy* for the publick Worship upon the Lord's-day.

It will be needless here in *like manner* to shew, That the Prayers that are appointed in our *Liturgy* upon all other ordinary Occasions of publick Prayer, are sufficiently comprehensive and compleat. I mean such as the *Administration of the Holy Communion*, The publick *Ministration of Baptism*, The publick Solemnization of *Matrimony*, The *Churching of Women*, The Order for *Burial of the Dead*, The *Ordination of Ministers*, The Ordinary *Feasts and Fasts* of the Church, &c. The Reader may be sufficiently convinc'd of this, if he will be at the pains carefully to look into the *several Forms* that are made use of in our Church upon such Occasions.

*Secondly*, When there happens any extraordinary Occasion of publick Prayer, Such as any extraordinary Good for which we ought to pray, Or any extraordinary Evil that we are to pray against, Or any extraordinary Duty or Sin about which we ought to pray, Or any extraordinary Mercy for which we are to thank GOD, In such Cases there may be made *special Forms* to be used in the publick VVorship.

So that upon the whole, we shall take it for granted till the Contrary be prov'd, That all Matter of publick Prayer *whatsoever*, that can be prov'd by the Law of GOD to be necessary or requisite in the publick VVorship, may be sufficiently comprehended or descended into, either in the *Common Forms* for ordinary Occasions, Or in the *special Forms* upon Extraordinary Emergencies.

'Tis plain therefore that by the Use of Set-Forms the Rule now under Consideration, may upon all Occasions  
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of publick Worship be sufficiently observ'd in every Congregation. For, as has been shewn, there may be a Set-Form or *Liturgie* drawn up, wherein all the Ordinary Matter of publick Prayer is sufficiently comprehended; And *Special Forms* may be contriv'd to suit extraordinary Cases; And both of these may be imposed or enjoin'd upon all the Ministers and Congregations in a Nation or National Church. And upon a Supposition that both of them are duly made Use of when they are enjoin'd, the publick Prayers in every Congregation will, upon all Occasions of publick V Vorship, be sufficiently comprehensive and compleat. But to proceed :

III. 'Tis plain that the Rule in Hand cannot be always sufficiently observ'd in every Congregation, or indeed in any Congregation, when we pray altogether in the free or Extempore Way.

For when Men are left to their Liberty and arbitrary Choice about the matter of Prayer, it cannot but be expected that more or less of it shou'd frequently, if not altogether, be omitted. And this might be prov'd at large by several Arguments insisted on in the First Section, to which I refer the Reader. For the Corruptions and Infirmities of humane Nature do make Men when left to their free Choice as liable to leave undone those Things which they ought to do, as to do those Things which should not be done. And therefore, as Men, when they are left to their Liberty and free Choice about the Matter of their Prayers, through Ignorance and Error in Judgment, thro' sinful Passions and Affections, thro' Indispositions in Body and Mind, thro' Carelesness and Negligence, thro' their

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neglecting to advise with others, thro' the want of the Assistance of God's Spirit, and thro' the Temptation of the Devil, cannot but frequently run more or less into positive Errors and Corruptions in their Prayers; So upon the same Accounts, their Prayers must very often be more or less defective.

It will be needless here to point distinctly at all the several Ways whereby Men may be lyable to Omissions in their free Prayers: I shall only hint at some few of them; And for the rest, refer the Reader to the First Section.

And thus for Instance:

How frequently may Men be lyable to Omissions in this Case through *Affectation of Novelty*, considering especially that the *Novelty* of *Extempore* Prayers is the main Thing that recommends them to the Vulgar. For if our Prayers be constantly compleat, they must in effect be ordinarily still the same; For we are commanded to *Pray as we lack, To make known our Requests unto God in every Thing, and in every Thing to give Thanks, &c.* Now if these Commands be duly observ'd, we must of necessity pray constantly to God for the same Things, and constantly give Him Thanks for the same Mercies, since we daily stand in need of the same good Things, and do daily receive the same Mercies from him. Now if our Prayers cannot be constantly compleat, unless they be in effect ordinarily still the same, It plainly follows, that those who aim at a continual Novelty, or at any unreasonable Degree thereof, must of course be frequently guilty of Omissions in their Prayers. Further,

The positive Errors, and the many needless and impertinent Things that must happen in free Prayers, will occasi-

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on them to be frequently defective. For the Things that are necessary to be insisted on in the publick Prayers, in Order to their being compleat upon all ordinary Occasions, are so many, that all the *Time* that can be conveniently allow'd for Prayer in the publick Worship, will be little enough to insist upon them. And consequently, if unsuitable and impertinent Things do frequently take Place in our Prayers, they must of Course be frequently defective. And thus for Instance, When Men turn their *Sermons* into Prayers (which, as I have before hinted, is very usually done) And when they mingle with the publick Prayers much of their own private Circumstances and Condition, Or of the private Circumstances of some particular Persons that they may in a special Manner be acquainted with (which, as the Dissenters may know from their own Experience, is very commonly practis'd) in such Cases I say, it must of course be expected, that their Prayers will be in several Things defective.

And how often may *Extempore* Prayers be defective upon Account of the enlarged Way of expressing Things, or the many Circumlocutions, that, as I shall have Occasion hereafter to shew, are usually affected in them? For the Things that are necessary to be insisted on in the publick Prayers, in Order to their being compleat, are so many, that unless they be express'd with a suitable Brevity they cannot be all brought in.

And further, Many through want of Courage may be frequently liable to Omissions of this Kind. As for Example, They may decline the Praying against Particular Sins, because that might displease such of their Hearers as might be addicted to those Sins. For put the Case that

a rich Member of one of their Congregations had *maliciously* slandered some other Person, If the Minister upon such an Occasion should put up a Petition to GOD concerning *Lying* and *Slandering*, the Person guilty might thereby look upon himself to be pointed and struck at, and so might be ready to be disgusted.

I might in like manner take Notice how *free* Prayers may frequently happen to be defective through *Weakness of Memory*, through *Ignorance* and *Error* in Judgment, and through *want of Care*. But waving all further Instances of this Kind,

I shall next, for the Illustration of the Argument in Hand, point at some *particular Cases* of Prayer, which, as far as ever I could find, are very frequently omitted by the *Dissenters in general* in their publick Worship.

And thus for *Instance*, They frequently neglect, to pray distinctly, about *many* of the *distinct Kinds* of Good and Evil, and of *Duty* and *Sin*: As for Example, To pray to GOD to preserve them from *Heresie* and *Schism*, from *Sedition*, *Privy-Conspiracy* and *Rebellion*, from *Plague*, *Pestilence* and *Famine*, from *Battle* and *Murther*, and from *sudden Death*, from *Hatred* and *Malice*, from *Vain-Glory* and *Hypocrisie*, from *profane Swearing*, from *Adultery* and *Fornication*, from *Slandering* and *bearing of false Witness*, from *Coveting their Neighbours Goods*, &c. Or to pray to GOD to give them Grace to honour their Parents, To obey the Supreme Magistrate, and all in Authority under him, To forgive their Enemies, Persecutors and Slanders, &c.

Further, They seem generally, if not altogether, in their publick Worship to omit *many Particulars* of the Matter of Praise.

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As for that way of Praising GOD by Celebrating the several Kinds, and the more remarkable Instances, of his Actions and Works, they seem for the most part to neglect it. 'Tis plain that there is but very little of it to be met with in their *Extempore* Prayers. To convince them of which, I shall offer to their Consideration a Specimen of it, taken out of the Psalms, as follows,

O give Thanks unto the Lord, who by his excellent Wisdom made the Heavens, and laid out the Earth above the Waters. Who made great Lights, the Sun to Rule by Day, and the Moon and Stars to govern the Night. Who smote Egypt with their first Born, and brought out Israel from among them. Who divided the Red-Sea into two Parts, and made Israel pass thro' the midst of it. Who led his People through the Wilderness, for his Mercy endureth for ever. Ps. 136.

Moses and Aaron his Servants shew'd his Wonders in the Land of Ham. He sent Darkness, and turned their Waters into Blood, and slew their Fish. The Land brought forth Frogs, even in their Kings Chambers. He spake the Word, and there came all manner of Flies and Lice in all their Quarters. He gave them Hailstones for Rain, and Flames of Fire in all their Land. He spake the Word and Grasshoppers came, and Caterpillars innumerable. He brought forth his People, and there was not one feeble Person in all their Tribes. He spread out a Cloud to be a Covering, and Fire to give Light in the Night Season. Ps. 105.

He sendeth the Springs into the Rivers, and watereth the Hills from above. He bringeth forth Grass for the Cattle, and green Herb for the Use of Man, and Vine to

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*make glad his Heart, and Oyl to make him a cheerful Countenance, and Bread to strengthen his Heart. Ps. 104.*

There is also another Kind of Praise which consists, *In Introducing in our Praises, other Persons and Things praising of God along with us, And as it were in calling upon and exhorting them so to do. And this must be allowed to be a natural Way of Praising God, since his Excellencies and Works are so generally known, And have so great an Influence over all his Creatures. And besides, we meet with several Instances of it in the Psalms.*

Now as for this Way of Praise, as far as ever I could know there is but very little of it to be met with in their publick Worship. 'Tis manifest that it does not usually take Place in their *Extempore* Prayers, as may be seen from the following Specimen of it taken out of the *Psalms*.

*O praise the Lord of Heaven all ye Angels of his, Praise him all his Host. Praise him Sun and Moon, praise him all ye Stars and Light. Praise him ye Heavens, and ye Waters that are above the Heavens. Praise the Lord on Earth ye Dragons and all Deeps. Fire and Hail, Snow and Vapours, Wind and Storm fulfilling his Word. Mountains and all Hills, fruitful Trees and all Cedars. Beasts and all Cattle, Worms and feather'd Fowl. Kings of the Earth and all People, Princes and all Judges. Young Men and Maidens, Old Men and Children, Ps. 148. &c.*

'Tis possible that they may alledge that they offer up these two Kinds of Praise in their *Singing of Psalms*. But this Pretence will avail but very little. For (besides that the *Psalms of David* do not contain several things of these Kinds of Praise that peculiarly belong to the *Christian Religion*) their *Ministers or Clerks* in their *Singing* do lye under

der no Obligation to run orderly through the *Psalm Book*; But are left at Liberty to Sing as much or as little of it as they think fit. And accordingly their Practice in this Respect is much like that in our *Parish Churches*. That is, they Sing some *Psalms*, or Portions of *Psalms*, and omit all the rest. And indeed, as far as ever I could hear, the greater part of the *Psalm Book* is not *ordinarily* Sung among them from one Generation to another. And I much question, whether those Passages above-mention'd were ever so much as *once* Sung in the Generality of their Congregations. For the *Psalms* that they seem the most inclinable to sing are such as are more adapted to the Nature of their *Extempore* Prayers, Or such as do consist chiefly of *general Matter of Confession, Petition, Praise, or Meditation*, such as the 51. 100. 119. and the like. 6

I shall only give one Instance more of the *Defectiveness* of their publick Worship. And that shall be concerning the *Confession of the Articles of the Christian Faith*, which seems to be a Branch of Praise; For when we do make Confession of the Articles of Faith, we do declare and set forth some of the *principal Perfections and Works* of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

And such a Confession is very useful in the publick Worship. For it will *demonstrate* to the World that we are *sound and Orthodox in the Faith*: It will be a means constantly to *inculcate* the Articles of Religion into Mens Minds, And to *preserve* the Church from *Heresie and Error*. And it will be also a Means to hinder Persons of dangerous and *Hæretical Principles* from *officiating* in *Christian Congregations*; since such Persons cannot join in the *publick Confessions* without notoriously contradicting their own Opinions. But



But the *Dissenters* seem altogether to neglect this Branch of Praise or Worship, Or at least they do perform it very defectively. Their *Directory* does not prescribe it. And their Ministers don't seem to lye under any Obligation to make a distinct Confession of the Articles of Faith in their publick Worship.

And accordingly as far as ever I could find, the most of the necessary Articles of Faith are not *ordinarily distinctly* confess'd in their publick Assemblies. Thus for Example, They do not ordinarily distinctly confess, *That there are three Persons in the God-head, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; That these Three are co-equal and co-eternal; That Christ was begotten of his Father before all Worlds; That he is of one Substance with the Father; That he is perfect God and perfect Man in one Person; That he was conceived of the Holy Ghost, and Born of the Virgin Mary; That he suffered under Pontius Pilate; That he rose again the Third Day from the Dead; That he ascended unto Heaven, and sitteth on the Right Hand of God; That he shall come from thence to judge the Quick and the Dead; That the Holy Ghost is God, proceeding from the Father and the Son; That there is one Catholick and Apostolick Church; That there is a Communion of Saints, a Forgiveness of Sins, a Resurrection of the Body, and a future Life.*

I might particularly Instance in some other of their Defects. But I presume that upon the whole from what has been already said, the Reader may be fully convinc'd, that when Men are left at Liberty to pray altogether in the *Extempore* Way, the publick Prayers must of Course be very frequently defective.

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But on the other Hand, the *Dissenters* may object, That if we pray *altogether by Set-Forms*, the publick Prayers must also be *ordinarily or frequently* defective; since, as they tell us, *there do frequently happen particular or special Cases of Prayer, that are necessary to be insisted on in the publick Worship, which cannot be provided for by Set-Forms.*

Now in Order to answer this Objection,

We may observe, That 'tis unreasonable and absurd to imagine that *every particular Case of Prayer should be insisted on* in the publick Worship; As for Instance, That we should distinctly *confess every particular Sin* that every Man may be guilty of, Or *pray for every particular Good* that every Man may want, Or *pray against every particular Evil* that every Man may be liable unto, Or that we should distinctly *thank God for every particular Mercy* that every Man may have receiv'd, &c. This cannot but be acknowledg'd on all Hands. For indeed it is impossible that the publick Prayers should descend so *particularly* unto every Man's Circumstances. And besides, such a *Particularity* if it could possibly be used in them, would Occasion very great Breaches of these general Rules, *Let all things be done unto edifying, Let all Things be done in Decency and Order*, as well as of several other Rules in Holy Scripture.

Thus for Instance, A Person that has committed *Adultery* may very lawfully confess unto GOD, That he has been guilty of that Sin in *Particular*. But if a whole Congregation should jointly confess that they were guilty of it, they might be justly chargeable with *Prevaricating*

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or *telling of a Lye*. And if they should jointly confess that *this* or *that particular Person* had committed the *said Sin*, they might be guilty of the Sin of *Slander* or *Detraction*.

In like manner, a Woman that stands in need of being Married, may very lawfully pray to God for a *good Husband*. And yet I make no Question but that the insisting *particularly* upon such a Petition would prove a Hindrance to the publick Devotion.

And so a Man that has a *Leud Wife* may very lawfully pray to God to *keep her chaste*, And to preserve her from the Sin of *Adultery*. And yet who sees not that it would be very inconvenient to insist upon such a particular Case in the publick Prayers?

I need not instance any *further*; Because any one that duly considers the Matter, cannot but be sensible, that there may be produced *innumerable Examples* of this Kind.

But we may further remark, that on the other Hand the publick Prayers *should not altogether consist of meer general Heads*, But *should also in a fit and proper degree descend into particular Cases*: And thus for Instance, it is not enough for us to pray only in *general Terms*, That God would give us those *good Things* we want, and deliver us from *those Evils* that we are liable unto, That he would enable us to *perform our Duty* and to *avoid Sin*; But we must also *particularly* pray about some *distinct Kinds* of *Good* and *Evil*, and of *Duty* and *Sin*.

But it may be ask'd, *How far are the publick Prayers to be particular in Respect of these and the like Cases?*

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Now in Order to answer this,

We may observe, that in our yielding Obedience to any *Law* of GOD, we must have regard to the *other Laws* or *Rules* that he has given us. And we must not, under pretence of coming up to a more than ordinary Pitch of Perfection in one Duty, neglect the Performing of another. And thus for Instance, we are commanded to be *charitable*, But we must not run out so far into Acts of Charity as to neglect to be *just to our Neighbours*, or to *provide for our Families*.

We may further remark, That in contriving of Prayers for the publick Use we are chiefly to consult the *Edification* of the *publick*; and are only to regard the *Edification* of *particular Persons* as far as will consist with *that* of the publick. For the publick Prayers are not to be consider'd as the Prayers of *one Man*, or of *any one Rank* or *Order* of Men; But they are to be look'd upon as the *common Prayers* of the *Church* or *Christian Society*. Now all *publick Acts* of Societies ought to be contriv'd with a publick Spirit and Design; that is, They ought principally to aim at the good of the *whole Society*, and ought only to aim at the good of *particular Members* as far as will consist with the good of the *whole*.

To the *Question* above propos'd, we therefore answer thus, *viz.* That in the publick Prayers, we are no further to descend into particular Cases, than we can in a Consistency with the due Observation of the several *Laws* or *Rules* that are laid down in *Holy Scripture*. And thus for Example, There ought to be no Cases descended into in the publick Prayers, but such as may be insisted on in a Consistency with the due Observation of these general Rules, *Let all thing be done unto edifying, Let all things be done in Decency and Order.*

I come now to give a distinct Answer to the *Objection* above propos'd. And,

1. I deny that there is any Case of Prayer that is *necessary* to be insisted on in the publick Worship that *cannot be provided* for or comprehended in Set-Forms. For indeed, As I shall be ready to maintain against the *Dissenters*, all Cases of Prayer whatsoever that can be insisted on in publick in a *Consistency* with the *due Observation* of the several *Laws* or *Rules* that are laid down in the Word of GOD, may be sufficiently comprehended in Set-Forms. But,

2. Let us, for Arguments sake, suppose, *that there may some times happen Cases of Prayer, that ought to be insisted on in publick, which cannot be provided for by Set-Forms*; Yet the *Dissenters* will never be able to prove from *thence*, that the *Rule in Hand* can be better observ'd by the Use of the *Extempore* Way, than it can be by the Use of Set-Forms: For I have already undeniably prov'd, that when Men are left at Liberty to pray altogether in the *free* or *Extempore* Way, the publick Prayers must of course be *ordinarily* or *frequently* defective. And *besides*, When Men are so left at Liberty, they may *frequently* omit *those very Cases* that the *Dissenters* suppose cannot be comprehended in Set-Forms. For no Doubt the same Corruptions of humane Nature that may make them liable to Omissions in general, may also make them liable to omit *such Cases*. Allowing therefore that Set-Forms will be defective in *some Things*, Yet 'tis evident on the other Hand that *Extempore* Prayers must also be *ordinarily* or *frequently* defective in *some Things*; and if so, what Advantage can the *Extempore* Way have above  
Set-

Set-Forms in this Respect? Certainly none at all, unless the *Dissenters* could prove, that the Defects which they suppose must of Necessity be in Set-Forms must be more, or of greater Consequence, than those Defects which must necessarily be in *Extempore* Prayers. But this they will never be able to do.

3. All that the *Dissenters* can rationally infer from the *Position* contain'd in the *Objection*, upon a Supposition it were true is this, *viz.* That over and besides the *Constant Use of a Set-Form* or Liturgy, there shou'd be a *Liberty* allow'd to every Minister to make use of free Prayer in the publick Worship, in Order to insist upon those Cases that they do suppose cannot be provided for by Set-Forms. And without doubt it must be granted on all Hands, that in *Cases of Necessity* where Men cannot act according to any settled or prescrib'd Rule, they must be left at Liberty to act without one, or to act according to their own *Discretion*. And for my Part, I don't see that free Prayer is altogether prohibited in the publick Worship of our Church: For what Law is there in Force, to prohibit a Minister from offering unto GOD a free Prayer, or a Prayer of his own private Composure in his Sermon? And is it not a common Practice in *England* for Ministers to make free Prayers in the Pulpit before their Sermons? And do not several Ministers in this Kingdom take also the same Liberty?

And now upon the whole, all Things duly consider'd, I hope 'tis plain to the Reader, that the *Second Rule* laid down in the *Introduction*, *viz.* That the Publick Prayers, as to the Matter of them, ought to be compleat, can be better observ'd by us by the Use of a Set-Form, than it can



be by the Use of *free* or *Extempore* Prayer. And I shou'd think that *at least* the *Dissenters* will allow that theaforesaid Rule can be better observ'd by the Use of a Set-Form and of *free* Prayer *added* to it, than it can be by the Use of *free* Prayer *alone*; which is all that is necessary to be contend'd for in the present *Controversy*: For *supposing*, that the *Laws* or *Rules* that God has given us concerning publick Prayer, could not be so well observ'd by the Use of a Set-Form *alone*, as they might be by the Use of a Set-Form and of *free* Prayer *added* to it, Yet if they can be better observ'd by the Use of a Set-Form and of *free* Prayer *added* to it, than they can be by the use of *free* Prayer *alone*, in *such a Case* a Set-Form must be allow'd to be *expedient* in the publick Worship.

I shall conclude this *Section* with the following Remark, *viz.* That 'tis vain to contend about the *Manner* of doing a Thing, whilst the *Substance* of it is *neglected* and left undone. This is as if the Master of a Family should spend all his Time in contriving *how*, and after *what Fashion*, to prepare Dishes of Meat, and in the mean Time neglect to get useful Food for his Family. The *Dissenters* have made a great Noise about the *Manner* of Performing publick Prayer, And would have it to be done after a Way of their own; And in the mean Time they seem to neglect to take Care of the *Substance* of it; And have left it to be done or undone according to the *Humour* and *Discretion* of every *private Teacher*. And herein they act contrary to that common Principle of theirs, *viz.* *In Necessariis Unitas, in non necessariis Libertas*, that is, *There ought to be Unity in Things necessary, But Men ought to be left to their Liberty about Things indifferent.* For

I suppose they don't reckon the *Substance* or *Matter* of Prayer among *indifferent Things*; And yet they leave their Ministers to their arbitrary Choice about it: For tho' the *Directory* affords some *Draught of the Matter* of publick Prayer, Yet I don't find that their Ministers do lye under any Obligation to make Use of it in their publick Worship.

### SECT. III.

Concerning the Third Rule laid down in the Introduction, viz. *That the publick Prayers ought to be decently and fitly express'd.*

**I**N order to the publick Prayers being decently and fitly express'd, it is requisite;

1. That the Expression that is used in them shou'd be grave, or such as will suit and consist with the solemnity of the publick Worship. This plainly follows from these general Rules, *Let all things be done unto Edifying, Let all things be done decently and in order.*

2. 'Tis requisite that they should be express'd with a decent Brevity. For we find that the *Wise Man* Advises us, *That the Words in our Prayers shou'd be few* (a). And our Saviour has warn'd us against *vain Repetitions* and *much Speaking* in our Prayers. And in order to our avoiding of that Fault, he has recommended to our Use an

(a) Eccl. 5. 2.

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*Excellent Form* wherein Things are express'd with the fewest Words. (b)

3. 'Tis requisite that the Expression used in them shou'd be plain and perspicuous; that is, we shou'd use such Words in our Prayers, as will be significant of the Things intended by them, And will express these Things intelligibly to others. For if the publick Prayers were not plainly and intelligibly express'd, They would in Effect be the same with Worship in an *unknown Tongue*; which I think is condemn'd by all *Protestants* whatsoever.

That *Decency of Expression in general* can be better attain'd in the publick Prayers by the Use of a Set-Form, than it can be by the Use of *free or Extempore Prayer*, might be prov'd at large by Arguments insisted on in the *First Section*, to which I refer the Reader.

But to be more particular,

1. 'Tis plain that Set-Forms have the Advantage of *Extempore Prayers* in Respect of the *Gravity* of the Expression, or the *Suitableness* of it to the Solemnity of the publick Worship. For the Forms that are to be used in all Congregations may be drawn up, with the greatest Care and *Deliberation*, by *Persons* that are in all Respects the most fit to express the publick Prayers in a grave and decent Manner. But *Extempore Prayers* must be made by every private Teacher; And the *Generality* of Teachers cannot be supposed to be very proper Judges of that *Manner of Stile or Expression* that will best suit with the Nature and Solemnity of publick Worship.

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(b) *Math.* 6, 7. 9.



And besides, *Extempore* Prayers (according to the Name) are generally or for the most Part *unpremeditated* or *off-Hand* in Respect of the *Expression* of them. Now 'tis manifest, that Men cannot generally speaking express Things with that Decency and Exactness when they speak *off-Hand*, as they can do when they *carefully study* and *contrive* what they are to say. For if they could express themselves as well in the *one Case* as in the *other*, there would be no Necessity for a Man when he publishes a *Book*, to take any greater Care about the *Expression* of it, than he would do if he was to express the *Substance* of it *off-Hand*. But I believe it will be allow'd on all Hands, that in the fitting of *Discourses* for the publick Use there must be abundantly more Care taken about the *Expression of them* than all this comes to.

2. 'Tis plain that Set-Forms have also the Advantage in Respect of the *Brevity of the Expression*. For 'tis manifest that there may be a Set-Form drawn up, wherein Things are express'd with all the Brevity that can be desired. But those that pray in the *Extempore* Way have generally speaking a long and enlarged Way of expressing themselves, And do frequently make Use of many needless Expressions to the same Purpose. And this might be made manifest by an Experiment in Fact, that is, By taking such Mens Prayers in Writing as they are utter'd in publick : For if that was done, it would be but too manifest to the World, that generally speaking they are very faulty in this Respect.

This is likewise plain from the Reason of the Thing. For Men in their *Extempore* Prayers must frequently be at a Loss which Head to proceed to next, And their Memo-

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This is likewise plain from the Reason of the Thing. For Men in their *Extempore* Prayers must frequently be at a Loss which Head to proceed to next, And their Memo-



ries and *Inventions* may often fail them, so as they cannot think upon any other Head or particular of Prayer, but that which they are for the present upon; And in such Cases they will be very ready to express Things with a needless Variety and Number of Words.

Besides, Those that pray in the *Extempore* Way are oblig'd to seek after a *constant Novelty* in their Prayers, in Order to recommend them to the Humour of their People. And this will in a great Measure necessitate them to enlarge very much upon every particular, and to make use of many *Circumlocutions*, and many different Expressions to the same Purpose. For if they shou'd express Things with *Brevity*, their Materials for Prayer would soon fall short or be exhausted; and consequently they must then have *ordinarily* or *very frequently* all the same Things over and over in their Prayers. And by that Means the Credit that *Extempore* Prayer gains with People by Reason of the *Novelty* of it would entirely sink and dwindle into nothing.

We may further take Notice, that Men may frequently lye under Apprehensions that those *Materials* of Prayer that they may have provided will not *hold out*, or be sufficient for *that Time* that is usually spent in their Congregations at Prayer. And in such Cases they will be ready to enlarge much on such things as are at Hand, And to make Use of *various Ways* of expressing them.

3. 'Tis likewise evident, that Set-Forms have the Advantage of *Extempore* Prayers in respect of the *Plainness* and *Perspicuity* of the *Expression*. For indeed it cannot ordinarily be expected, that *Discourses* or *Speeches* about any religious Matter, should be so plain and intelligible when they are express'd *off-Hand*, as they might be if they were carefully *studied* and committed to *writing*. And

And *besides*, there are many Men, and some of them too of good Sense and Learning, that have naturally an *intricate* and *obscure way* of expressing themselves. And this Imperfection of Speech will take place in their *Prayers*, as well as in their *Sermons*, or *Writings*, or their ordinary way of speaking.

But one of the greatest Advantages that Set-Forms have in Respect of the Matter in Hand seems to be this, *viz.* That *People* may be thoroughly acquainted with them before they are to join in them in the publick Worship. They may *themselves* carefully peruse them in Order to find out their *true Meaning* and *Sense*. And when they meet with such Things in them as they do not clearly apprehend, they may *consult* their Ministers, or other judicious Persons about them, And by that means come at the true Understanding of them. But no such Advantages can be had about *Extempore* Prayers; since People cannot be acquainted with *them* before they are to join in them in the publick Worship.

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## SECT. IV.

*Concerning the Fourth Rule laid down in the Introduction, viz. That publick Prayer ought to be perform'd in right Method and Order.*

**M**ethod and Order do always suppose a *variety* and *number of Parts*; And will in general consist, in the *due Disposition* and *Modelling of these Parts*. But more particularly



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particularly, that the Method and Order of any Thing be good, the following Conditions are requisite, viz.

1. *That there be a due and meet distinction of the Parts*; especially of the *Principal* and *more remarkable* Parts. This, in Respect of those Kinds of Order that may be observ'd by the *Eye* or *Ear*, may be term'd the *Position* or *Ranging* of the Parts in a *due Distance* from one another as to *Time* or *Place*.

The *Distinction* of the *Parts* is of the greatest Necessity in good Order; For without it there could be no Order but Confusion. And thus for *Instance*, If the remarkable Parts of a *Mans Body*, I mean the *Head*, the *Eyes*, the *Nose*, and *Hands*, &c. were not fitly distinguish'd, but confounded and jumbled together, there would be no good Order or Method in them.

2. *That every Part be in his proper Place and Time*. For what Order could there be in a *Man's Body* if every Part thereof were not in its proper Place? Or what Order could there be in a *Sermon*, if those things which ought to be said *first* in it are said *last*, Or those things which ought to come in at the *middle* are said at the *Beginning*, or the *latter End*?

3. *That the Parts bear a just Proportion to one another, and to the whole*: I mean that every *Part* be so much lesser than the *whole* as is meet and fit for it to be; And that every *Part* be greater or lesser than *another*, according as right Method and Order will require. And thus there would be no just Order in a *Mans Body*, if the Parts thereof did not bear a just Proportion to one another, and to the whole.

There may be said to be *two other* Conditions of right Method and Order, viz. *That there ought to be a due Harmony*



mony and Union among the Parts, And that no necessary or useful Part should be wanting; But the Consideration of these in Respect to publick Prayer, does fall in under other Parts of this Discourse: And therefore I shall not here take any Notice of them.

That the Rules of good Method and Order can be better observ'd in the publick Prayers by the Use of a Set-Form, than they can ordinarily be by the Use of the free or *Extempore* Way, might be prov'd at large by Arguments insisted on in the *first Section*, to which I refer the Reader. But to be more particular,

I. 'Tis plain that Set-Forms have much the Advantage in Respect of the *Distinction* that ought to be observ'd in the Parts of Prayer. 6.

In Order to make this appear, I shall at present only make some brief Comparison of the publick *Worship* of our Church and the *Extempore* Prayers of the *Dissenters* in this Respect.

And thus for Instance, In the publick Prayers of our Church there are considerable Stops and Pauses made when the Minister proceeds from one Part of Prayer to another. And by Means of this the People will be the better able distinctly to apprehend every Part; And will likewise have sufficient Time and Opportunity to give their distinct Assent to it. But the *Dissenters* in their *Extempore* Prayers do not generally speaking make any such considerable Stops and Pauses, when they proceed from one Part of Prayer to another. For indeed if they should commonly do so their Hearers would be ready to think that they were generally at a Loss, Or that they had but very indifferent Degrees of the Gift of Prayer. Further,

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In the publick Worship of our Church every Part of Prayer has a *distinct Preface* and *Conclusion* for it self; which must also be allowed to be of considerable Use in Order to distinguish the Parts. But notwithstanding the great *Length* of *Extempore* Prayers, And that they are generally made up of *Confessions, Petitions, Deprecations, Intercessions, Thanksgivings, and Praises* of Varicus Kinds, Yet *ordinarily* there is but *one Preface* and *one Conclusion* to the whole.

Further, In the publick Prayers of our Church the People are to *bear a Part with their Voices in several Parts* of the Service, And are besides deliberately to *say* their *Amen* to every Prayer in it. And this, as it will serve to distinguish the several Parts, so it will be a great Help to the People, in order to their joining in every Part, and making it their own. But in *Extempore* Prayers the People do not bear a Part with their Voices, And they do not ordinarily distinctly say their *Amen* 'till the latter End of them.

To give only one *Instance* more, In the publick Worship of our Church the Minister and People do frequently *change their Gesture* when they proceed from one Part of Prayer to another. And this also will be a good Mark of Distinction in the *Parts*, And will *besides* be very useful in Order to fit and prepare the Congregation to join in *them*: For the *Change of Posture* will be a great Means to refresh *People*, And *they* will thereby be the better able to go through all the Parts of the *Service* with Life and Vigour. But notwithstanding the great *Variety* of Parts that do generally occur in *Extempore* Prayers, Yet neither the Minister nor the People do ordinarily change their Posture when they proceed from one Part to another. 2. 'Tis



2. 'Tis plain likewise that Set-Forms have the Advantage in Respect of the *bringing in the several Parts in their proper Place and Time*. For this may be done with the greatest Exactness in Set-Forms. But in *Extempore Prayers*, Mens *Memories* may often fail them; And by Reason of that, when they are upon one Head that which they should bring in next may not occur to their Minds, And in the *mean Time* they may put some *other* into its Place. The *Affectation of Novelty* will likewise Occasion the *Misplacing* of Things at a *strange rate*. For when Men make their Prayers continually *new*, they will be always changing and altering of their Method. And indeed, the *jumbling and transposing* of the several Parts of Prayer, seems to be none of the least of those *Artifices*, that some Men make Use of in Order to make their Prayers appear continually new. Now right Method and Order must be something in the *Truth* and *Setled Nature* of the *thing*, And not subject to continual *Turn and Change*. And consequently if the Parts of Prayer be continually transpos'd or alter'd as to their Place, they cannot be *always* suppos'd to be put into the *best* Method and Order; Nay in such a Case they cannot but *frequently* be placed very *disorderly*.

3. Set-Forms have likewise the Advantage of *Extempore Prayers* in Respect of the *Proportion that the several Parts of Prayer ought to bear to one another, and to the whole*. For 'tis evident that there may be a Set-Form drawn up wherein this Condition of good Method and Order is observ'd with the *greatest* Exactness. But when Men are left at Liberty to pray altogether in the *free Way*, some of them will enlarge *more*, and others *less*, upon this or that *particular Part* of Prayer according to their different *Hu-*  
mours



mours and Sentiments of Things. Now if there be but one best way of observing a due Proportion in the Parts of Prayer; then we may justly suppose, that when there is so great a Variety the Parts cannot always bear the *fittest* Proportion to one another: Nay in such a Case, it may of course be expected that the publick Prayers will frequently be very disorderly in this Respect.

*Besides*, As has been before taken Notice of, *Needless Enlargements* are generally speaking unavoidable in *Ex-tempore* Prayers; And *that* of it self will occasion a great *Disproportion* in the Parts. And we may further remark, that, as has been already hinted in the *Second Section*, When Men are allow'd to pray altogether in the *Ex-tempore* Way, they will be very prone to mingle *too much* of their own *private Condition* with the publick Prayers. And by Reason of that, those Parts of Prayer that have the nearest Relation to their particular Cases, may swell to too great a Bulk, and be very unproportionate to the rest of the Parts of Prayer.

## S E C T. V.

*Concerning the Fifth Rule laid down in the Introduction, viz. That publick Prayer in a Christian Congregation ought to be directed to the blessed Trinity in Unity.*

**T**Hat we ought in the publick Worship, to offer up our Prayers to *all* the Persons in the God-head together, will be acknowledg'd by all that believe the Doctrine of the Blessed Trinity.

But

But 'tis also plain from holy Scripture, that we ought distinctly to worship every Person of the Blessed Trinity by himself: That is, for Example, we ought to invoke him by Name, and direct our Speech to him, And make mention of those Attributes that peculiarly belong to him. And thus we may be said distinctly to pray to Christ if we should address him thus, O God the Son, Redeemer of the World, have mercy upon us miserable Sinners; O blessed Jesu, the only begotten Son of God, hear our Prayers; O Lamb of God, that takest away the Sins of the World, deliver us, &c.

That God the Father, the first Person of the Blessed Trinity, is distinctly to be worship'd, will be acknowledg'd on all Hands.

That our Lord Jesus Christ is distinctly to be worship'd is very plain: For he is God infinite and Eternal; and consequently ought to have distinct Adoration paid to him. And besides, we are plainly commanded in holy Scripture distinctly to worship him. For no less than such a distinct VVorship can be imply'd in that Command, VVorship him all ye Gods, Pl. 97. 7. Which the Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews refers to, Heb. 1. 6. And we are commanded to honour the Son as we honour the Father (a). Now the Father is distinctly to be honoured and worshiped, and therefore so must the Son. Every Knee is commanded to bow to him of Things in Heaven and Things in Earth (b). Now bowing of the Knee to him can import no less, than that we should distinctly worship him. Besides Christians are stiled in Scripture such as called on the Name of Jesus, That is, such as distinctly prayed to him and worship'd him (c). Nay the primitive Christians were

(a) Job. 5. 22. (b) Phil. 2. 9, 10.

(c) Act. 13. 14. and 22. 16: 1 Cor. 1. 2.



stiled by the *Heathens the Worshippers of Christ*; For we find that *Pliny*, when giving a Description of them to the *Roman Emperor*, does declare concerning them, *that they sung Hymns to Christ as God.*

We find also that *Stephen the first Martyr* does offer up his last Prayer distinctly to *Jesus Christ*, saying, *Lord Jesus receive my Spirit* (a). And we find likewise in the *Revelations*, the *four Beasts* the *Elders* and the *Angels* distinctly praising the *Lord Jesus*. *And they sung a new Song*, saying, *Thou art worthy to take the Book, and to open the Seals thereof; For thou wast slain, and hast redeem'd us unto God by thy Blood out of every Kindred and Tongue and People and Nation. And hast made us unto God Kings and Priests, and we shall reign on the Earth. Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive Power and Honour and Glory and Blessing* (b).

That the *Holy Ghost* is distinctly to be worship'd is also plain. For we are expressly to *bless in the Name of the Holy Ghost* (c). Now when we bless in his Name, it is plainly imply'd, that we pray to him. For when a Man says to his Child, *God bless you*, It is in Effect a Prayer to God to bless his Child. And in like Manner, when the Minister says, *The Fellowship of the Holy Ghost be with you all evermore*, he does in Effect pray to the Holy Ghost that he would be always present with his People.

Furthermore, the principal Reason why distinct Worship and Adoration is paid to *Jesus Christ* is, because he is *truly God* infinite and eternal. Now the *Holy Ghost* is

(a) *Act. 7. 59.*(b) *Rev. 5. 9, 10, 12.*(c) *2 Cor. 13. 14.*



also truly God infinite and eternal, And consequently he ought distinctly to be worship'd as well as Jesus Christ.

That this *distinct Worship* of the Blessed Trinity can be the *best* and the *most orderly* and *completely* done by the Use of a *Set-Form*, might be prov'd at large by Arguments insisted on in the *first, second and fourth Sections*, to which I refer the Reader.

I shall here only, for the Illustration of the Argument, make some *brief Comparison* of the publick *Worship* of our Church and the *Extempore* Prayers of the *Dissenters* in this Respect.

Now as to the *Worship* of our Church, 'tis plain that the *Forms* that are made use of in it, are *very distinct* and *clear* as well as *compleat* and *full* in this particular. For that I may give some *Instances*.

How *distinct* and *clear* are the following *Invocations* that we offer to the Blessed Trinity? *Lord have Mercy upon us: Christ have Mercy upon us; Lord have Mercy upon us. O God the Father of Heaven have Mercy upon us miserable Sinners; O God the Son Redeemer of the World have Mercy upon us miserable Sinners; O God the Holy Ghost proceeding from the Father and the Son have Mercy upon us miserable Sinners; O holy blessed and glorious Trinity three Persons and one God have Mercy upon us miserable Sinners. O Lamb of God that takest away the Sins of the World have Mercy upon us. O Lamb of God that takest away the Sins of the World hear our Prayer. O Christ hear us. O Son of David have Mercy upon us &c.*

And how *distinct* and *full* are those *Praises* that we offer up to the Blessed Trinity? As for Instance, in our *Rehearsing*

sing the *Apostles Creed*, we mention to the Honour of Christ, His being our Lord, and the only begotten Son of GOD, His being conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the blessed Virgin, His Resurrection, Ascension, and Exaltation, and his coming to judge the *World*; &c.

In Rehearsing the *Nicene Creed*, we more particularly mention to the Honour of Jesus Christ, That he was begotten of his Father before all *Worlds*, that he is GOD of GOD, Light of Light, very GOD of very GOD, that he is of one Substance with the Father, that by him all things were made. And to the Honour of the Holy Ghost we mention, That he is the Lord and Giver of Life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spake by the Prophets; &c.

In Rehearsing the *Athanasian Creed*, we do in a most solemn and distinct manner set forth the Praises of the Holy Trinity. I shall Instance in some Passages of it; And the Catholick Faith is this, that we worship one GOD in Trinity and Trinity in Unity. Neither confounding the Persons nor dividing the Substance. For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost; But the God-Head of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost is all one, the Glory equal, the Majesty coeternal. The Father is uncreate, the Son uncreate, and the Holy Ghost uncreate. The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible. The Father Eternal, the Son Eternal, and the Holy Ghost Eternal. The Father GOD, the Son GOD, and the Holy Ghost GOD; &c.

Besides



Besides in our *Liturgy* we distinctly offer up Praises to the holy *Trinity* in the frequent Use of that *Doxologie*, *Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the Beginning is now and ever shall be world without End, Amen.* And in the *Conclusions* of many of the *Collects* and *Prayers*. And also in several of our *Hymns* of Praise; As to Instance in the *Te Deum*; *The Holy Church throughout all the world doth acknowledge thee, the Father of an infinite Majesty; Thine honourable true and only Son, Also the Holy Ghost the Comforter. Thou art the King of Glory O Christ. Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father, &c,*

I come next to consider the *Extempore* Prayers of the *Dissenters* in Respect of the Matter in Hand.

And here I must remark, that in the *Directory* there is not the least Notice taken of this *distinct Worship* of the *three Persons* in the God-head. In all that Draught of Prayer that the *Assembly* lays down in it, there is not to be met with so much as one *distinct Act* of *Adoration* or *Worship* to *Christ*, or the *Holy Ghost*. A strange *Omission* in Men that pretended so much to bring the *Christian* Worship to the greatest Height of Purity and Perfection.

But as to the *Practice* of the *Dissenters*,

As far as ever I could find, they do generally in their Prayers neglect to offer up *distinct Invocations* to *Christ*, and the *Holy Ghost*. Nay many of them have cavill'd at the *distinct Invocations* to the *Trinity* that are in our *Liturgy*, as vain Repetitions, or a taking of the Name of God in Vain.

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Their Praises to the Blessed Trinity are generally very *defective* and *indistinct*. They do not generally offer up any *distinct Hymns of Praise* to Jesus Christ. And herein they come far short of the *Primitive Christians*, whom they pretend so much to imitate in their Way of Worship; For as has been already hinted, *they* were noted by the *Heathens* in their ordinary Worship to sing Hymns of Praise unto Jesus Christ.

They do not generally in their Praises *distinctly* address themselves to Jesus Christ, or *speak* to him; And they commonly neglect *distinctly* to set forth his Actions and Perfections. And the like may be observ'd concerning the *Holy Ghost*.

All the *distinct Worship* that they seem to have of the Blessed Trinity does consist in a *Doxology* that they commonly use at the *Conclusion* of their Prayers, which is generally express'd by them in these or the like Words, *These and all other necessary Mercies, we beg in the Name and Mediation of Jesus Christ, to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost be all Honour and Glory world without End.* But what is this in *Comparison* with that distinct Worship and Adoration we pay to the Blessed Trinity in the publick Worship of our Church? A Person that does not believe the *Supreme Deity* of Christ, or the Holy Ghost, and consequently will not pay a just Tribute of Praise to either of them, may assent to such a *Doxology* as this. For why may not an *Arian* ascribe all Honour and Glory to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost? May he not join three Persons together, One whereof he may think to be the Supreme God, and the other two his *Vice-gerents*, And to these three ascribe all Honour and Glory? Or why mayn't he use such a *Doxology*, as well as that Form in *Baptism*,  
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*I baptize thee in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; Or that Blessing, The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Love of God, and the Fellowship of the Holy Ghost be with you all evermore?*

But this *Doxology* it self is often omitted by some *Dis-senters*: For some of them do frequently conclude their Prayers with a *Doxology* to GOD in *general*. And such of them as do conclude with the *Lord's-Prayer*, have no *Doxology* to the *Trinity*, any more than our Ministers have in the Prayers that they make in the *Pulpit* before their *Sermons*.

I must also add, that this *Doxology* as it is used in their Worship, can be to little or no Purpose towards the Edification of the People. For it being the *Conclusion* of their Prayers, the People may generally be conceived to be wearied, and far past the Height of their Devotion, when the Minister does repeat it. And indeed any one that is present at their Assemblies may observe, that when the Minister does come to *it*, the Congregation does *generally* appear to withdraw their Attention, instead of being intent upon their Devotion.

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## SECT. VI.

*Concerning the Sixth Rule laid down in the Introduction, viz. That publick Prayer ought to be presented unto God through Christ the Mediatour.*

**T**HAT we are to put up our Prayers to GOD in the Name of Christ, And to plead for Acceptance upon

on *Account of his Merits and Mediation*, is as certain as any thing in the Christian Religion.

This will be the most *fully and compleatly* done, By *pleading distinctly* upon Account of the *several remarkable Kinds and Instances* of his meritorious *Actions and Works*; such as his *Incarnation*, his *Nativity and Circumcision*, his *Baptism, Fasting and Temptation*, his *Cross and Passion*, his *Resurrection and Ascension*, &c.

That *this* can be the *best* and the most *compleatly and orderly* done by the Use of a Set-Form, might be prov'd by *Arguments* insisted on in the *first, second and fourth* Sections, to *which* I refer the Reader.

I shall *here* only for the Illustration of the Argument, make some brief Comparison of the *publick Worship of our Church*, and *that of the Dissenters*:

Now in that Form used in our *Church*, we insist on the *Merits and Mediation of Jesus Christ in General*, almost in every *Collect and Prayer*. In the same Form we do likewise pray for Acceptance with God upon Account of the several remarkable Kinds and Instances of his meritorious Actions and Deeds: As for Instance, in those Prayers in the *Litany*, By the *Mystery of thy holy Incarnation*, by thy *holy Nativity and Circumcision*, by thy *Baptism, Fasting and Temptation*; Good Lord deliver us. By thine *Agony and bloody Sweat*, by thy *Cross and Passion*, by thy *precious Death and Burial*, by thy *glorious Resurrection and Ascension*, And by the coming of the *Holy Ghost*; Good Lord deliver us.

But on the other Hand, This pleading with God upon *Account of the Merits and Mediation of Christ*, is generally speaking, as far as ever I could find, but *very defectively*



*Extrovely and superficially done in the Extempore Prayers of the Dissenters.*

I confess that at the *Conclusion* of their Prayers they do it in *general Terms*; And that commonly in these or the like Words, *These and all other Mercies, we humbly beg in the Name and Mediation of Jesus Christ, To whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost, &c.* But as far as ever I could know, they do not commonly do *this* in the *other Parts* of their Prayers, that is, when they proceed from one *Head* or *Part* of them to another. And I don't doubt but that a Minister might pray with the greatest *Approbation* among them, and yet *never* distinctly touch at *this* till the *very Conclusion* of his Prayers. Nay I make no Question but that it would be look'd upon as a considerable Fault, if the Minister should at the End of every two or three *Petitions*, beg for *Acceptance in the Name and Mediation of Jesus Christ*, as is frequently done in that Form used in our Church. For that might not be consistent with that *sort of Oratory* that they may think is requisite in the pouring forth of *Extempore Prayers*: Or it might not agree with the Humour of their People; who as they are always desirous of *new Prayers*, so we may safely presume they would not be pleased with hearing the *same Thing* over and over in one and the *same Prayer*.

Now *this when* 'tis done only at the *Conclusion* of their Prayers, can be to little or no purpose towards the *Edification* of the People; For as has been noted in a *Parallel Case* before, the People may generally speaking be supposed to be heavy and wearied at the *Conclusion* of one of their *Extempore Prayers*; And to be ready rather to with-

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56 *Of the Gesture to be us'd at Prayer. Sect. VII.*

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*draw* their Attention, and seek after a little *Breathing*, than to join in *it* with a true and hearty Devotion.

But further,

They do frequently or generally neglect in their Prayers, to plead *distinctly* with God for Acceptance upon Account of *several* of the remarkable Kinds and Instances of the meritorious Works of our Blessed Saviour. As for Instance, upon Account of his *Incarnation* and *Nativity*, his *Circumcision* and *Baptism*, his *Fasting* and *Temptation*, His *Agony* and *bloody Sweat*, his *Resurrection*, *Ascension* and *Exaltation*, &c.

The Directory has not enjoyn'd them to perform this Branch of Worship in *so particular* a Manner. And indeed I think, there is scarcely any of the *Particulars* now mentioned taken Notice of in that Draught of Prayer that is laid down in *it* for the publick Worship.

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SECT. VII.

*Concerning the Seventh Rule laid down in the Introduction, viz. That publick Prayer ought to be performed with a decent and becoming Gesture and Behaviour of the Body.*

**I**N Order to the Congregations joining in the publick Prayers with a *decent and becoming Gesture and Behaviour of the Body*, It is requisite,  
1. That the particular Gestures that *they* do make Use of, be *decent, and suitable to the religious Exercise that they*  
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are employ'd in. This I believe will be granted on all Hands; And therefore I shall not stand here to prove it.

2. It is requisite, that there should be a *decent Uniformity in the Gesture and Behaviour of the Congregation at every part of Prayer*; As for Example, That they should *all stand up, or kneel down* according as the *publick Order or Rule* for Decency will require. This as I conceive cannot be denied by the *Dissenters*. For when the *Gesture and Behaviour of the Congregation is Uniform*, it will thereby appear *best*, and the *most visibly* to the World, that they are *jointly employ'd* about the same religious Exercise. Whereas when there is no *Uniformity*, but one Man makes use of *this* and another of *that* *Gesture and Way of Behaviour*, those that are Spectators cannot so readily conclude that they are *jointly employ'd in offering up Prayers unto God*.

That *Decency of Gesture* in the publick worship, can be better attain'd by the Use of a *Set-Form and Rule of Prayer*, than it can be *without the Use of it*, Or than it can be when Men are left at Liberty to pray *altogether* according to their *own Discretion* (not only in Respect of the *Matter, the Words, and the Method of Prayer*, but also in Respect of the *Circumstances of it, and particularly, of the Gesture and way of Bodily Behaviour* that is to be used in it) might be prov'd at large by Arguments insisted on in the *First and Second Sections*, to which I refer the Reader.

But to be more particular,

By a *Set-Form and Rule of Prayer*, the *particular Gestures* that are to be used at every *Part of Prayer*, may be *expresly and particularly* prescrib'd both to the Minister and to the Congregation. And those Gestures that are

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prescrib'd, may be such as are *decent*, and *suitable* to the Nature of those Parts of Prayer for which they are appointed. And if such a Rule be duly observ'd in the publick Worship, *indecent Gestures* will be sufficiently *avoided*, And *Uniformity* in Gesture will likewise be sufficiently *attain'd*. Now if sufficient *Provision* were made in the Matter, 'tis very possible in the Nature of the Thing to observe such a Rule. For why mayn't a whole Congregation (making allowances for Cases of Necessity) *kneel*, or *stand up*, or *bow* at *this* or *that Part* of Prayer? Don't the *Papists* all to a Man of them *kneel* in their *Chappels* at their Prayers? And every one knows that their *Chappels* are as much fill'd and crowded with People, as *Dissenting Meeting Houses*, or *Protestant Churches*.

But on the *other Hand* when the *particular Gestures* that are to be used in the *several Parts* of Prayer, are not *expressly* prescribed and appointed, But every Man is left at Liberty, to use *this* or *that particular Gesture* in *this* or *that Part* of Prayer, according as he in his own *private Judgment* and *Discretion* shall think fit (which I take to be the Case with Respect to the *Dissenters* in their way of publick Worship, for I don't find that there is any *particular Gesture* prescrib'd for any Part of Prayer in their *Directory*, or indeed in *any* of their *publick Declarations* that ever I could meet with) I say, in such a Case, it cannot *generally* be expected, that *Decency of Gesture* should be *sufficiently* attain'd in the publick Worship; Or at least that it should be *so well* attain'd, as it might be by the Use of a *Set-Form* and *Rule of Prayer*.

This might be prov'd at large, by Arguments insisted on in the *First* and *Second Sections*. Let it suffice *here*

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Sect. VII. Of the Gesture to be us'd at Prayer. 59

in the general to observe, that when Men are *thus left at Liberty*, they may of Course be supposed to run frequently into *Indecencies* in *Gesture* and *Behaviour* at their Prayers, if it be consider'd, that they are all *more or less* subject to *Error* and *Prejudice*, to *sinful Passions* and *Affections*, to *Sloth* and *Negligence*, and to be tempted by the Devil. For no Doubt by Reason of these and the like Disadvantages, Men will be prone to err in *this*, as well as in all other Cases that are of a *parallel Nature*.

And thus *Indecencies* in *Gesture* and *Behaviour* are very frequently to be observ'd at the publick Worship of the *Dissenters*. As for Instance, At their Prayers many of them do frequently *sit*, In which I think they cannot be excus'd from great Irreverence. Others of them do generally accustom themselves to *Lean* and *Loll*, which is also unseemly and unbecoming in the publick Worship. They generally *Sit* at their *Praises*, whereas *standing* seems to be a more suitable Posture for that Part of Worship.

There is but little *Uniformity* in *Gesture* and *Behaviour* to be observ'd at their Prayers. For some of them do stand up, whilst more do *sluggishly Lean*, And others do *Sit*. And the same Persons may be observ'd, some times to *Sit*, and then to *rise up and stand*, and then to *Lean*, and afterwards to *Sit down* again.

They never that I could hear of *kneel* in their publick Assemblies : And yet *Kneeling* is the most proper and suitable Gesture for Prayer of any now in Use. And Calvin esteemed the Injunction of that Posture so warrantable, *That he declareth it to be such a humane Constitution as is groundd upon the Word of God, And to be so humane that it is also divine* (a).



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prescrib'd, may be such as are *decent*, and *suitable* to the Nature of those Parts of Prayer for which they are appointed. And if such a Rule be duly observ'd in the publick Worship, *indecent Gestures* will be sufficiently *avoided*, And *Uniformity* in Gesture will likewise be sufficiently *attain'd*. Now if sufficient *Provision* were made in the Matter, 'tis very possible in the Nature of the Thing to observe such a Rule. For why mayn't a whole Congregation (making allowances for Cases of Necessity) *kneel*, or *stand up*, or *bow* at *this* or *that Part* of Prayer? Don't the *Papists* all to a Man of them *kneel* in their *Chappels* at their Prayers? And every one knows that their *Chappels* are as much fill'd and crowded with People, as *Dissenting Meeting Houses*, or *Protestant Churches*.

But on the *other Hand* when the *particular Gestures* that are to be used in the *several Parts* of Prayer, are not *expressly* prescribed and appointed, But every Man is left at Liberty, to use *this* or *that particular Gesture* in *this* or *that Part* of Prayer, according as he in his own *private Judgment* and *Discretion* shall think fit (which I take to be the Case with Respect to the *Dissenters* in their way of publick Worship, for I don't find that there is any *particular Gesture* prescrib'd for any Part of Prayer in their *Directory*, or indeed in any of their *publick Declarations* that ever I could meet with) I say, in such a Case, it cannot *generally* be expected, that *Decency of Gesture* should be *sufficiently* attain'd in the publick Worship; Or at least that it should be *so well* attain'd, as it might be by the Use of a *Set-Form* and *Rule of Prayer*.

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in the general to observe, that when Men are *thus left at Liberty*, they may of Course be supposed to run frequently into *Indecencies in Gesture and Behaviour* at their Prayers, if it be consider'd, that they are all *more or less* subject to *Error and Prejudice*, to *sinsful Passions and Affections*, to *Sloth and Negligence*, and to be tempted by the Devil. For no Doubt by Reason of these and the like Disadvantages, Men will be prone to err in *this*, as well as in all *other Cases* that are of a *parallel Nature*.

And thus *Indecencies in Gesture and Behaviour* are very frequently to be observ'd at the publick Worship of the *Dissenters*. As for Instance, At their Prayers many of them do frequently *sit*, In which I think they cannot be excus'd from great Irreverence. Others of them do generally accustom themselves to *Lean and Loll*, which is also unseemly and unbecoming in the publick Worship. They generally *Sit* at their *Praises*, whereas *standing* seems to be a more suitable Posture for that Part of Worship.

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I shall only further add, That it does not sufficiently appear from the *outward Carriage and Behaviour* of the *Dissenters* at their Prayers, that they are all *jointly employ'd* in the *same Religious Exercise*. For put the Case, that a *Papist* should accidentally come into one of their *Meetings* when the Minister is praying *Extempore*; And taking a View of the Congregation, would see some *Sitting*, and some *Leaning*, and others *Standing*; and would see that the same Persons do sometimes *Sit*, and afterwards *Stand*, and then *Lean*; And would withal observe, that *none* of the Congregation does *kneel*, And that none of them does *pray with his Voice* except the Minister: What can we imagine that such a Person would conclude in that Case? Certainly he could not from such an Appearance conclude, that both the Minister and the Congregation were jointly employ'd in offering up Prayers unto GOD. Nay he could not readily know whether the Minister *himself* was Praying or Preaching.

But on the *other Hand*, if we suppose that such a Person comes accidentally into a *Regular and Orderly Congregation*, and taking a View thereof, sees them *all* meekly *kneeling* upon their Knees, with their *Prayer Books* in their Hands, and does *besides* observe them to be offering their Prayers unto GOD *with their Voice*; In such a Case, he would be at no Loss, but would immediately conclude, that *both the Minister and the Congregation* were *jointly employ'd* in the Exercise of Praying unto GOD.

SECT. VIII.

*Concerning the Eighth Rule laid down in the Introduction, viz. That Prayer in publick ought to be frequently and constantly kept up.*

**I**T will be readily acknowledg'd in the general, that Prayer in publick ought to be frequently and constantly kept up. For we are commanded To be instant in Prayer, To pray always, And to pray without ceasing: Which Commands being general, must have Respect to the publick Prayers, as well as those that are private or solitary.

If it be demanded, *How often are we to pray to God in publick?* I answer in general, That we are to pray as often as we can in a Consistency with the due Observation of the other Laws or Rules that GOD has given us. Now 'tis manifest (as will appear from what shall be hereafter said) that Prayer in publick may be daily kept up in many Places or Congregations in a Consistency with the due Observation of all Christian Laws whatsoever: And that the daily and constant keeping of it up in such Places, will be of great Use and Advantage to the Church in general, but especially to such private Christians as have Leisure and Opportunity to attend daily upon the publick Worship.

In Order to this,

We may observe, that though all private Christians cannot attend daily upon the publick Worship, Yet there are



are very many that have both *Leisure* and *Opportunity* so to do; And that in a *Consistency* with the due discharging of their *several Duties* and *Callings*. And even those Persons that cannot every Day of the Week be present at the publick Prayers, may yet *sometimes*, and upon *several accidental Occasions* have *Leisure* and *Opportunity* to attend upon them.

We may further remark, that there are many *Christians* that have a *particular Call* in the Providence of GOD to spend more Time in his Worship than other People. As for *Instance*, When *Age* hath disabled a Man to be serviceable to others in an *Active Life*; When Men are engaged in no *Business* of the World to take up their Time; When *Afflictions* and *Crosses* do call for an extraordinary Degree of *Piety* and *Repentance*; When Men are in Danger of *falling* into great *Temptations*; When they have recovered from some great *Sin* and *Failing*; Or when impartial *Prudence* does tell a Man, that he may do more good by a Holy and Pious Example in the Worship of GOD, than he can by an *Active Life*, &c.

Now to all such Persons, as well as to all others in general that can constantly or frequently attend the publick Worship, the daily Opportunities of publick Prayer will be a very great *Blessing*, and a *Help* to strengthen and confirm their *Piety* and *Devotion*.

For it must be allow'd that the *publick Worship* has far more and greater Helps to *Piety* and *Devotion*, than that which is *private* or *solitary*. For God loves the Gates of Sion more than all the *Dwellings* of Jacob. The Presence of GOD's *Ministers* makes the *Devotion* more solemn and taking; And there is something in the *Church* or *Temple* that

that may *strike* Veneration into the Minds of Men, and may serve to put them in *Mind* of the Duty of Prayer; For the Church being us'd by People for no other purpose, but Devotion and the Service of GOD, the being present at it cannot ordinarily speaking but put them *more* in Mind of GOD's Worship than their being present at any other *ordinary Place*. The *Company* of good Christians will tend to stir up an holy *Emulation* in us; They will strengthen and confirm our Devotion by their *Example*; And make our Prayers more acceptable unto GOD by their *Concurrence* in them. The *Solemnity* and *Exactness* of the Service it self will contribute much to our Edification. And the *Eye* of the World may serve to make us watchful at our Prayers, and may prevent much of a *sluggish Spirit* that may seize us usually at *Home*.

And hereby *also* many pious and good Christians will be in a Condition to do more good by their *Example*, than otherwise they could do. By this Means the Influence of their Example will spread, not only among those that are acquainted with their *private Practice*, but also among those that have no other Knowledge of them but by seeing them at *Church*; or by seeing them going to it, or coming from it. And further,

By this Means Prayers and Intercessions will be daily offered up in the best and most Solemn Manner for the whole Kingdom, And for all Ranks and Degrees of People therein, Which must be of great Use to draw down the Blessing of GOD upon them.

And hereby *also* the *Matters* of Religion will be better instill'd and fix'd in the Minds of *People*; They will be *daily* and *constantly* suggested to *them*, and so will be the more likely to take deep Impression and Root.

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Again, When Prayer in publick is *daily* kept up, The *Face* of Religion will always *Shine*: For thereby there will *daily* and *hourly* be publick Demonstration of it given to the World.

I shall only further add, That Daily publick Worship has the Example of the Church in all Ages to recommend it. We find that GOD appointed that a *Sacrifice* should be offer'd up by the Jews every Day Morning and Evening (a). And that there were set and appointed Hours of daily Prayer at the Temple (b). The Jews also had daily Opportunities of publick Worship at their Synagogues, as is manifest from the antient Customes and Records of that Nation.

And 'tis plain that the *Primitive Christians* had daily Prayers in their Churches or Temples. And many of them were not content with the Hours of publick Prayer for the Day, But had also their publick Devotion in the Night, and in the *Morning Watches*. Nay several Churches among them have had the Worship of GOD kept up in them *without Intermission* Night and Day.

I come now to shew that the Rule in Hand can be *better observ'd*, Or that Prayer in publick can be *more frequently kept up* by the Use of a Set-Form, than it can be by the Use of *free* or *Extempore* Prayer.

Now 'tis plain that by the Use of a Set-Form, Prayer in publick may be kept up *every Day*. And thus by the Order of our Church, *All Priests are bound to say daily the Morning and Evening Prayer*. And accordingly at all Churches, where there are Persons that can conveniently attend, Daily Prayer is kept up.

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(a) *Exod.* 29. 42.

(b) *1st.* 3. 1.



Nay I may further add, that by the Use of a Set-Form, Prayer in publick may in some Places be kept up *without Intermission* Night and Day. For we see from *Ecclesiastical* Story that it has been actually *so* kept up in several Places.

But the *Dissenters* who pray in the *Extempore* Way have not *daily Prayers* in any of their publick *Meetings* or *Congregations*. And indeed it is not consistent with the Nature of *that way of Prayer*, to have Prayer in publick constantly and daily kept up; And much more is it inconsistent with it, to have the publick *Worship* kept up *without Intermission* Night and Day. For *private Ministers* cannot have sufficient Leisure and Opportunity, to study or contrive Prayers for the publick Use *twice or thrice* a Day. This of it self, would take up the most of their Time, Especially if they must aim at some thing of a *Constant Novelty* in their Prayers. Besides if the *Dissenting Ministers* should make Prayers *twice* a Day, either their Prayers would be *very contemptible*, by Reason of their want of sufficient Time to premeditate and Contrive them; Or else by such a frequent Practice they would very soon *fall into a Set-Form*. For in such a Case, 'twould be impossible for them, *daily* to find out *new Matter* and *Expression* of Prayer; Or to have any such Variety, whereby the People might be impos'd on to think they were still entertain'd with new Things. And then even the *less discerning* sort of People would readily perceive that their Prayers must ordinarily or generally speaking be still the same. And so the main thing that takes with People in *Extempore* Prayers, I mean the *Novelty* of them, would fall to the Ground. And every one would see that there

there is nothing in *it* but what might be had by a *suitable Variety* in Set-Forms.

I shall only further add, That from what has been said, we may plainly see of what mischievous Consequence it is to the Church of *Christ*, to turn Set-Forms out of the publick VVorship; since thereby *Christians* will be depriv'd of the *Benefit* of the *daily publick Sacrifice*, I mean the daily publick Prayers. And in that Respect their Condition will be worse than that of the *Jews*; who had their *daily Sacrifice* publicly offer'd unto *God*, As well as *daily Opportunities* of publick VVorship in their *Temple* and *Synagogues*.

## SECT. IX.

*Concerning the Ninth Rule laid down in the Introduction, viz. That the Congregation assembled ought to join in the publick Prayers with Devotion, or with a suitable Temper and Frame of the Mind.*

**B**Y Praying with Devotion I understand, The Praying with those Christian Graces that are necessary to make our Prayers acceptable unto God; Such as Knowledge, Faith, Love, Feruency and Humility, &c. We pray with Knowledge, when we know that those Things for which we pray are agreeable to *God's Will*, or are such as we ought to pray for; VVe pray with *Faith*, when we believe that the Things for which we pray, are such as *can* or *will be granted*.

ted to us by the Mercy and Goodness of God. We pray with *Love*, when in the Act of Prayer we love God, that is, desire to keep his Commandments, to be like unto him, and to enjoy him, And also love our *Neighbour* that we pray *with* and *for* as we ought to do; We pray with *Humility*, when in our Praying we have a just Sense of our own *Unworthiness*, and of the great *Distance* that is between God and us, And when the *Behaviour* of our Bodies resembles such a Temper of the Mind; We pray with *Fervency*, when we are truly sensible of the great Need we stand in of those Things for which we pray, And are very earnest in our Desires to get them obtain'd.

I proceed to shew that the Rule in Hand can be better observ'd by us when we make Use of a Set-Form and Rule of Prayer, than when we pray without one, or pray altogether in the *free* or *Extempore* Way.

In Order to this, we must observe, that there are certain *Means* and *Helps*, some of which are *necessary* and others *very useful* in Order to *stir up* and *excite*, or to *promote* and *advance* true Devotion in a *Christian Congregation*. Now if *more* of the Benefit and Advantage of such *Means* and *Helps* can be had by the Use of a Set-Form, than can be had when we pray without one, or pray altogether in the *free* Way, then it must be allowed that the Rule in Hand can be the best observed by the Use of a Set-Form. But 'tis manifest that *most* of the Benefit and Advantage of such *Means* and *Helps* can be had by the Use of a Set-Form, as will appear if we distinctly consider them. And,

1. In Order to the Congregations joining in the publick Prayers with Devotion, 'tis necessary or requisite,

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that



that the Prayers should be free from Errors and Corruptions in the Matter. This will be granted on all Hands; and therefore I shall not stand to prove it.

Now 'tis plain that Set-Forms have very much the Advantage in Respect of this Help to Devotion. Since as has been shewn in the *first* Section, Errors and Corruptions in the Matter may be sufficiently avoided in Set-Forms; whereas when we pray altogether in the *Extempore* Way, Faults of that Kind, cannot but frequently happen in the publick Prayers. Now such Kind of Imperfections and Faults must do Harm to the publick Devotion in several Respects. As for Instance,

If a Minister vents his *private Errors* in his Prayers, His Hearers may be thereby ready to *imbibe* them, and be perverted from the Truth? If he *misapplies* Texts of Scripture, They will be prone to do the same after him. If he runs out into *Invectives* and *Harsh Censures* that may nourish and foment in them a Spirit of *Faction* and Uncharitableness, If he *launches out* extravagantly into the Commendation of his own *Set*, That may tend to confirm them in their Errors, and fill them with Spiritual Pride and Vain-Glory. If he affects to entertain them with *new Things* and *curious Speculations*, That, instead of stirring up Devotion in them, will serve to gratifie and feed their idle Humours and Fancies, and to make them despise the solid and substantial Things of the Worship of God. And to give only one *Instance* more, If he runs out into such Things in his Prayers as his Hearers plainly see and apprehend to be *corrupt, unsuitable* or *impertinent*, it cannot but tend much to obstruct and hinder their Devotion; For in these Cases they will be ready to dwell

dwell *too* much in their Thoughts upon such Things, And to be so prejudic'd against, or so to despise the Person that officiates, that they cannot devoutly join in the rest of his Prayer.

2. *The Compleatness and Comprehensiveness* of the publick Prayers must be allowed to be of great Use towards the publick Devotion and Edification. Now I have prov'd in the *Second Section* that by the Use of a Set-Form the publick Prayers can be the most comprehensive and compleat. I shall *here* for the Illustration of the Argument shew by *some Instances*, that the publick Prayers used in our Church, do much more contribute to Devotion in this Respect, than the *Extempore* Prayers of the *Dissenters*. 6

And thus for Instance, in the publick Prayers used in our Church, upon every *Lord's-Day*, we distinctly pray for Grace to perform the several Kinds of Duty, and to avoid the several Kinds of Sin; which is not ordinarily speaking done every Lord's-Day in the publick Worship of the *Dissenters*. Now hereby, every Person that attends upon our publick Prayers, will constantly have the particular Duty or Sin that he may in a special Manner be concern'd in, very plainly and clearly suggested to his Mind. As for Example, Suppose a Man has been or is guilty of the Sins of *Swearing, Adultery* or coveting his Neighbours Goods; When he hears the *third, seventh and tenth* Commandments solemnly read, and does after the Reading of every one of them pray with his own Voice, *Lord have Mercy upon us, and incline our Hearts to keep this Law*, the Sense of his Sins cannot generally speaking but be brought into his Mind; And the mentioning of the Sins in such a solemn

*solemn and distinct Manner*, must contribute very much to make him *think seriously* about them; It may touch his *Conscience*, and put him upon Resolutions never to commit them again. But such a Person may long enough attend upon *Extempore Prayers*, And yet never have *those Sins* so clearly and distinctly suggested to him.

And hereby also every Person that attends upon the publick Worship of our Church will have *all the several Kinds of Sin* that ever he may have committed, or is at the present guilty of, And *all the several Kinds of Duty* that he may have neglected, or does for the present neglect, at every time of Solemn Worship brought into his Mind; which he *cannot ordinarily have* by attending on the *Extempore Prayers* of the *Dissenters*. Now this must be of exceeding Use towards a Man's Devotion and Edification: For when a Man does, as it were *with one View*, see all the several Sins that he has been guilty of, or is liable to fall into, And has them so suggested to his Mind that he cannot *generally* fail distinctly to *think about* them; This must tend much to raise in him a Sense of his own *Unworthiness*, and to *humble* him before God. Hereby he may *examine* and *try* himself to the Bottom. And the Sight of all his Infirmities and Follies may spur him on to *Diligence*, to recover his ill-spent and lost Time. And when *all the several Kinds of Duty* are *likewise* brought *at once* into our View, It must contribute much to convince us of the great and difficult Work that lyes upon us to do; And may stir us up to use our utmost Endeavours, and call frequently on God for Assistance and Help in Order to go through with the great Work of our Salvation. Further,

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In the publick Worship of our Church upon every Lord's-Day we distinctly pray for all the several Kinds of good Things that we stand in need of, and against all the several Kinds of evil Things that we want to be delivered from; And that, as may appear from what has been said in the Second Section, in a much *distincter* and *fuller* Manner, than is ordinarily done in the *Extempore* Prayers of the *Dissenters*. And hereby the *particular Good* that every Man may in a *special Manner* stand in Need of, And the *particular Evil* that he may in a *special Manner* be liable unto, will naturally enough be brought into his Thoughts. And this cannot but be of great Use towards the making him affected, and truly serious at the publick Prayers: Since Men are generally speaking the most ready to be moved, with those Things that do the most closely touch and relate to their own *particular Case* and *Condition*. And hereby also all the several Kinds of Good Things that every Man stands in Need of, and all the several Kinds of Evil that he may be liable unto will at every time of solemn VVorship be suggested to his Mind; And this will serve to shew Men in what great Need they stand of the good Providence and Protection of Almighty God, and how infinitely they are obliged to him for all his Mercies.

Further, In the publick Worship of our Church we descend in our Praises into the several *Attributes* and *Perfections* of Almighty God, And into the several Kinds of his *Actions* and *Works*, as well as into the more remarkable and famous *Instances* of these Kinds: And that as has been before shewn in a much *distincter* and more particular Manner than is ordinarily done in the publick Worship

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of

of the *Dissenters*. Now this will serve to give Men exalted Thoughts, of the Glory and Power of God, of his admirable Wildom and Contrivance; of his Infinite Bounty and Goodness, and of the great Obligations we lye under to him for all his Mercies and Blessings.

That I may give only one Instance more, In the publick Worship of our Church, we do constantly make a *distinct Confession of the several Articles of the Christian Faith*; which, as has been before shewn, is not ordinarily done in the publick Worship of the *Dissenters*. Now this will *also* tend much to the publick Devotion and Edification. It will raise in Mens Minds *right Notions* and *Apprehensions* of the Nature of God: It will bring into their Thoughts *some* of the *Principal Works* that God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost have done for the Good and Benefit of Mankind: It will serve to put them in mind of their *Christian Profession*; And to guard them from Errors and Corruptions in the *Faith*.

3. A *decent and fit way of Expression* in the publick Prayers will tend much to promote the publick Devotion and Edification. Now as I have shewn in the *third Section* by the Use of a Set-Form the publick Prayers may be decently and fitly express'd in all Congregations, whereas when we pray altogether in the *Extempore Way* *indecent* and *unsuitable Expressions* cannot but frequently happen to be made Use of in the publick Prayers.

Now *such kind* of Expressions cannot but prove a great Obstacle to the publick Devotion and Edification in several Respects. As for Instance, If the Minister that prays *expresses himself darkly and obscurely*, those that hear him cannot join rightly with him; And they may *sometimes*

times be ready to understand what he says in a wrong or dangerous Sense. If he accustomes himself to make Use of *Mystical Phrases* and *Terms of Art*, Many People may be tickled and pleased in their Fancies with Hearing them, meerly because they dont understand them, Or because *they* are above their Reach and Capacity; And by that Means they may contract an unhappy Humour of Despising all Things in the Worship of God that are plain and intelligible. If he affects to make Use of *new Phrases* and *Turns* of Expression, many may be ready thereby to please themselves so much with the Gingle and Words of a Prayer, that they wont be affected in any due Measure with the Matter or Substance of it. When there happens any *Witty Turn* or *fine Flourish* in his Prayer, Some will be so ready to dwell upon it in their Thoughts, that a great Part of the rest of the Prayer that may be more useful will be neglected by them. And to give only one general Instance more, when he makes Use of *Vulgar* and *uncouth Phrases*, or of *unbecoming* and *unseemly Expressions*, It may occasion *Laughter* in some, And tend to make *others* despise and *undervalue* him, Or to *prejudice* them against him, and must therefore prove a very considerable Hindrance to their Devotion.

4. The next Help that I shall take Notice of is, *The Digesting of the publick Prayers into right Method and Order*: Which must be allow'd to be of great Use towards the furthering of the publick Edification. Now 'tis plain from what has been said in the *Fourth Section*, that by the Use of a Set-Form, the *Rules* of good Method and Order may be constantly and sufficiently observ'd in the publick Prayers, Whereas Disorders in the Method cannot but



but frequently happen if we pray altogether in the *Extempore* Way. Now such Disorders must prove a great Hindrance to the publick Devotion. As for Instance; When the Parts of Prayer are *indistinct*, or *confusedly put together*; the People will not be able distinctly to join in them, And consequently must in a great Measure be incapable of the Exercise of true Devotion. VVhen the Minister makes no *sufficient Stops and Pauses* when he proceeds from one Part to another, the Congregation will not have sufficient Time to make *every Part* their own. VVhen he *passes abruptly* from one Thing to another, it may raise in their Minds prejudices against him, and so may prove a Hindrance to their Devotion. When he *enlarges unreasonably* upon one Thing, it may make them weary and dull. And to give only another Instance, If he affects a *constant Novelty* in his Method, it may tend to *divert* Peoples Minds very much from the *solid and substantial* Things of Prayer.

5. The next Help that I shall make mention of is, *The directing of the publick Prayers in a fit and proper Manner to the right Object of Worship*, viz. the *Blessed Trinity in Unity*. This will tend to promote Devotion, in as much as it will serve to raise in the Minds of People *just and awful Notions* and *Apprehensions* of God the Father, Son, and holy Ghost; And to prevent any *rude or dangerous Fancies* that they may be apt to entertain concerning the Deity in *general*, or concerning any Person in the *Blessed Trinity in Particular*. That in Respect of this Help to Devotion Set-Forms have the Advantage, has been shewn in the *Fifth Section*.

6. Another

6. Another Help is, *The directing of the publick Prayers to God, in the Name and Mediation of Jesus Christ.* And this when *rightly and compleatly* done, will much further the publick Devotion; In as much as it will serve, to raise in us a deep Sense of our own Unworthiness, To shew us the great Need we stand in of Christ Jesus, and inculcate upon our Minds the great and wonderful Things he has done in order to our attainment of Eternal Happiness. That Set-Forms have the Advantage in Respect of this Help to Devotion, has been shewn in the *Sixth Section.*

7. *The decent and becoming Gesture and Behaviour of the Congregation* assembled to join in Prayer, will be a very great Help to the publick Devotion and Edification. For when the Behaviour of a whole Congregation is *uniform and decent*, it will serve to put People in Mind of what they are about; They will *thereby* strengthen and confirm one another in the Duty in Hand; And be prompted by one anothers *Examples*, to aim at that holy Temper of Mind, which is resembled by the outward Carriage and Behaviour of their Bodies. But on the *other Hand*, when the Behaviour of a Congregation is *not* in any suitable Measure *uniform*, And when many of them do make Use of *indecent Gestures*, The Devotion of People must be thereby very much obstructed. For when a Man beholds the indecent Carriage of *other Persons* in the same Assembly with him, it may raise in him a Dislike or Disgust against *them*, And may much divert his Thoughts from the Duty in Hand. And the Indecencies of this Nature that a Man *himself* may give Way to, may tend much to hinder his Devotion. As for Instance, when a

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Man accustomes himself to *Leaning*, or *Lolling*, or *Sitting* at Prayer, how ready may he be to be *drowsie* and *inattentive*? That Prayer by a Set-Form and Rule, has the Advantage in Respect of this Help to Devotion, has been shewn in the *Seventh Section*.

8. *The constant and frequent Keeping up of publick Prayer will be a great Means to encrease and promote the publick Devotion.* For no Doubt he that accustomes himself to attend the publick Prayers *twice* a Day, will be more ready to improve in Devotion, than he that may only be present at them once a Week. Of the great Benefit and Advantage of Daily Prayer in publick, I have spoken in the *Eighth Section*, And have *therein* shewn the Advantages of a Set-Form above *Extempore* Prayer in that Respect.

9. *The distinct Hearing of the publick Prayers* read or spoken by the Minister, will be also a Help to Devotion. That Set-Forms have the Advantage in this Respect, is very manifest: For since People may be sufficiently acquainted with *them* before they are to join in them, Or may have them ready to peruse in their *Prayer Books* at the publick Worship, there will be no Danger of their being at *any Loss* in this Matter. But on the other Hand, at *Extempore* Prayers People must be very often put to great Inconveniencies in this Respect. As for Instance, When they are *hard* of Hearing, When they are at any considerable *Distance* from the Minister, when the Church is much *throng'd* and *crowded*, And when the *Voice* of the Minister happens to be *weak* and *low*, or not *clear* and *easie* to be apprehended. For in such Cases they cannot distinctly understand what the Minister says, and consequently



quently cannot join in his Prayer with any right Devotion.

10. *The speaking of the publick Prayers with the Voice,* will be a Help to Devotion. For it will be a Means to keep Men from being *sleepy* and *drowsie*; And will be of great Use towards the making of the publick Prayers a *Mans own Personal Act and Deed*. And it will likewise very much tend to keep the Mind in a *vigorous State* of Action: For the *Exercise* of the *bodily Powers* and *Faculties* has a great Influence upon the *Mind*, And does generally speaking add Life and Spirit to all *its* Actions. And thus for *Example*, When a Person in his Prayers makes use of an *active* and *lively* Gesture and Carriage of the Body, he will be more capable of being devout, than *generally speaking* he can be, when he indulges himself in *sluggish* and *lazy* Postures and Ways of Behaviour. And in like Manner, when a Man joins in the *singing of Psalms* with his Voice, he can ordinarily speaking be more devout, than when he only joins in *that Exercise* with his Mind. And the *Dissenters* themselves cannot but testify from their own Experience, that they are generally more devout and affected when they speak *themselves* their own Prayers, than when they only join in their Minds in the Prayers that *another* Man makes.

I know some do object, that the Peoples using their Voices in publick Prayer, makes a *confused Noise* in the Church, But this with as much Reason may be urged against the *Singing of Psalms*. *Saint Bafyl* could not be of Opinion that the vocal Prayer of a Congregation makes an indecent Noise, when he affirms, *That when Prayer is not accompanied with a multitude of Voices it is*

*not*

not it self: Nor *Tertullian*, when he tells us, *That our unanimous Wishes and Cries do in a Manner besiege the God of Heaven*: Nor *Saint John*, when he so often ascribes joint Vocal Prayer to the *Saints and Angels in Heaven* (a): Nor the Prophet *Esaias*, when he represents the Angels as *Crying to one another* (b): Nor *Saint Paul*, when he exhorts us to *glorifie God with one Mind and one Mouth* (c).

That *Set-Forms* have the Advantage in Respect of this Help to Devotion is very plain: For in *them* the People can readily join with their *Voices*; But 'tis impracticable for them to join *vocally* in *Extempore* Prayers. And accordingly in the *Dissenting* Meetings the People do never do it. Nay they seldom or never do *audibly* pronounce their *Amen* at the latter End of their Prayers.

II. The *having of Prayer Books* (or the committing of the *Prayers* that are to be used in the publick Worship *into Writing or Print*, so as People may be sufficiently furnish'd with Copies of them) will be a great Help to Devotion in the publick Worship.

For *hereby*, People may be sufficiently acquainted *before-hand*, with the Prayers that they are to join in at the publick Worship: And by that Means they may truly understand the *Sense*, and the *Method* and *Order* of them, And before every Time of publick Worship may seriously *think* and *Ponder* upon them. Whereas *Extempore* Prayers cannot be known by People till the very instant of Time wherein they are to join in them. And from hence it clearly follows;

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(a) *Rev.* 5. 12. 6, 10, 14, 2.

(b) *Esai.* 6. 3.

(c) *Rm.* 15. 6.

*First*, That by the Use of a Set-Form that Rule, *Be not rash with thy Mouth, nor hasty with thy Heart, to utter any thing before God*, can be much better observ'd by the Congregation, than it can be by the Use of *Extempore* Prayer: Since when they pray by a Set-Form, they may *seriously consider* and *weigh* before-Hand the Prayers that they are to join in: Whereas in the *other Case*, they must very frequently offer unto God such Things in their Prayers, as they never so much as thought on before-Hand.

*Secondly*, 'Tis from hence likewise very evident, that the Congregation can join *much better* in Set-Forms than in *Extempore* Prayers. For by Reason that People are not acquainted *before-Hand* with *Extempore* Prayers, They must before they can *distinctly join* in them, be employed in several Exercises, that cannot but very much obstruct and hinder their Devotion. As for Instance, They must *first carefully attend* to the Minister, and listen for every Sentence before it comes from his Mouth; Which of *it self* is a Work that will ordinarily very much employ their Minds; especially if the Voice of the Minister be weak and indistinct, Or if they stand at any considerable Distance from him. And *when they have caught* the Sentence from his Mouth, they may often be at a Loss to know the *Meaning and Sense* of it. And when they do understand it, they must *next judge* whether it be proper and fit for them to offer unto God. In all these *several* Ways must Men be employ'd in their Thoughts, before they can join in *Extempore* Prayers. Whereas they may join in a Set-Form without any Distractions of this Nature.

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We may further observe, That when *People have Prayer Books*, they will thereby be in a Condition *exactly* to remember those Things they prayed for in publick. But as soon as we have heard an *Extempore* Prayer we are ready to forget it. Now if a Man forgets those Things that he prayed for, how can he expect to receive them at the Hands of God? Or how can he be said to *ask a Thing with Sincerity* if he never thinks of it afterwards?

We may further take Notice, That when *People have Prayer Books*, they may read the publick Prayers at the Time of Divine-Service; which will be of considerable Use towards their Devotion. For the Attention of the Mind is fix'd by the *Eye* as well as by the *Ear*: For as when we hear a Thing, so when we see it, our Minds are ready to be intent upon it. Besides, the Reading of the publick Prayers will keep the *Eye* from *Rambling* abroad, or looking upon external Objects; which is ordinarily a great, and very often a mischievous Hindrance to Devotion.

12. In Order to Peoples joining in the publick Prayers with true Devotion, it will be necessary, or at least very useful, That they should *be fully satisfied and persuaded in their Minds*, that the Prayers that they are to join in, be in *all Respects conformable* to the Mind and Will of God. Now 'tis certain that Set-Forms have very much the Advantage of *Extempore* Prayers in this Respect. For from what has been *hitherto* said, it must be plain to every considering Person, that by the Use of a Set-Form the publick Prayers may in *all Respects be sufficiently conformable to the Mind and Will of God*. And the very Thoughts and Apprehensions of *this*, will be one of the greatest

greatest Encouragements for People to join in the publick Prayers with true Devotion.

But on the other Hand, from what has been said in the foregoing *Sections*, It must be plain to every impartial Man, that *Corruptions* and *Faults* in Respect of the *Matter*, the *Words*, the *Method* and *Order*, the *Parts* and *Circumstances* of Prayer, cannot but frequently or commonly happen in the publick Worship, when we pray altogether in the *Extempore* Way. Now the very Fancy and Apprehension of this, cannot but mightily discourage People in their joining in *Extempore* Prayers; And may raise such Prejudices in their Minds against *them*, that it will be impossible for them generally speaking to join in *them* with any true Devotion. And upon this *Foot* it is, that the greater Part of the Members of our Church, have *always* express'd *so great a Dislike* of an *Extempore* Way of Worship, and have shewn themselves so Zealous and Warm for the constant Use of Set-Forms.

13. There will arise several Hindrances to Devotion, from the *Consideration* of the Minister that officiates in the publick Worship, which will be *much greater* and of worse Consequence when we pray in the *Extempore* Way, than when we pray by a Set-Form. And thus for Instance,

V When the Person that officiates is *too quick* and *voluble* in his *Speech*, it will be a Hindrance to Devotion in *Extempore* Prayers, Because thereby the Congregation will not be able to keep up *Pace* with him, or *distinctly* to apprehend what he says. But it will not be near so great a Hindrance in Set-Forms, Because People may be acquainted with them before-Hand.

And

And even if the Minister speaks *too slow*, or draws his VVords too long after one another, it will be an Inconvenience in *Extempore* Prayers, Because *thereby* the People will not in many Cases be able to join together, or make Sense of what he says.

Further, when a *Congregation* is disaffected to their Minister, Or when *private Persons* have a Disgust at him, Both of which do very commonly happen, their Devotion will be much more hindred when he prays in the *Extempore* VVay, than if he should pray by a Set-Form. Because *Extempore* Prayers are look'd upon as Mens *own private* Composures, whereas Set-Forms will be look'd upon as the Composures of the *Church*, since they may be approv'd of by the Body of the *Governors* and *Pastors* of it, assembled in a *Synod* or *Convocation*.

The same is to be observ'd if the Minister is suspected to be *erroneous* in his *Judgment*, or to entertain *Dangerous Opinions*, Or if he be *Young* and *unexperient'd*, Or not so *regular* in his *Conversation* as he ought to be, Or if he be but of *mean Parts* and *Abilities*. The very Apprehension of such Things will very much tend to obstruct the publick Devotion.

And in like Manner, if the Person that officiates be *dull* and *indisposed* at Prayer, If he has been *careless* in Premeditation, Or has been under any *Temptation* whatsoever that will make him unfit duly to discharge that Part of his Duty; The publick Devotion in all *such Cases* will be *damp*t and *weakened* by Reason of his Faults and Indispositions.

14. The next Help that I shall take Notice of is, *The Multitude and Number of Persons joining together in Prayer*  
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er at the very same time. And this must be acknowledged to be of great Use towards the strengthening and confirming of the publick Devotion. For when many do jointly employ themselves in the same Action, they will confirm and encourage one another in the Performance of it. And the joint Concurrence of many Persons at the same time in the same Prayers, will serve to make them more efficacious and acceptable unto God. That as to this Help Set-Forms have much the Advantage, is very plain: Since by the Use of a Set-Form, all the Congregations in a whole Kingdom, may at the same Time be jointly offering up the same Prayers unto God. But when we pray altogether in the *Extempore* Way this cannot be so well effected: For thereby there may be different and (in several Respects) *opposite* Prayers in different Congregations: And many Prayers that may be met with in some Congregations, may not be had in Others. Nay in *Extempore* Prayers it will generally speaking be impossible, that even the same Congregation should all join at the same Time; By Reason of their Various *Prejudices*, Or their different *Opinions* of the Performer, Or their different *Ways* of apprehending what he says.

15. The last Help to Devotion that I shall take Notice of is, *The Assistance of God's Spirit*. And 'tis plain that in this Respect Set-Forms have much the Advantage. For the Spirit of God in this Case does now only assist us in an ordinary Way; That is by *Blessing the right Use*, of those external and moral Means and Helps, that are necessary or useful in Order to stir up and promote Devotion in a Christian Congregation. Now I have already shewn that Set-Forms have much the Advantage in Re-

spect of *such* Means and Helps: And consequently when we make Use of a Set-Form, we may justly expect, that the Spirit of God will *better* or *more* enable us to pray with true Devotion, than when we pray altogether in the *Extempore* Way.

And now upon the *whole* it seems to be very plain, that the Rule now under Consideration, *viz. That the Congregation assembled ought to join in the publick Prayers with Devotion*, can be better observ'd by the Use of a *Set-Form*, than it can be when we pray altogether in the *free* or *Extempore* Way.

But on the other Hand 'tis objected,

*That the Novelty of the Matter and Words of a Prayer is a Help to Devotion, But that in Extempore Prayers there can be a greater Novelty both as to the Matter and Words than there can be in Set-Forms, &c.*

Now in Order to answer this;

1. We may observe, That 'tis absurd to imagine that the *Matter* of the publick Prayers should be *always* entirely *new*. For as has been before taken Notice of, We are commanded to *pray as we lack, To make known our request unto God in every Thing, And in every Thing to give Thanks, &c.* Now since 'tis manifest that there are *many Things* that we do *still* stand in Need of, and *many Mercies* that we do *constantly* and daily receive from Almighty God, It plainly follows that we must constantly pray for the same Things, And daily bless God for the same Mercies.

And indeed *ordinarily speaking* the publick Prayers as to the Matter and Substance of them, must for the *most Part* be still the same. There is still the *same Object* of Prayer

Prayer to be invocated, *The same Christ* to pray through ;  
The *same Sins* to confess, The *same good Things* to ask,  
The *same Evils* to pray against, The *same Perfections* and  
*Works* of God to celebrate, And the *same Mercies* to  
thank God for, &c. 'Tis true the *Case* of *one particular*  
*Man* may be often alterable in some of these *Respects*.  
As for *Instance*, At one *Time* he may be guilty of *Pride*,  
And at another *Time* of *Malice*, And after that he may  
be under *Afflictions* and *Troubles*. But all this will Oc-  
casion no Alteration in the publick Prayers: For if the  
publick Prayers be *compleat*, as they ought to be, they will  
descend into the *ordinary Necessities* of all Men, in as *par-*  
*ticular* a Manner as is requisite or fit, Or will consist with  
the publick Good and Edification. And therefore what-  
ever Alterations may happen in a Man's *private Condition*,  
Yet still his *ordinary Necessities* (whatever they be) will  
be taken Notice of, or hinted at in the publick Prayers,  
in as *particular* a Manner as is fit and convenient. Sup-  
posing therefore a Man is guilty of a Sin to Day, as for  
Example of *Pride* or *Malice*, that he was not guilty of  
Yesterday, however *such a Change* in him may possibly  
Occasion some Alteration in his private Prayers, Yet it  
will not Occasion any Change or Alteration in the *publick*  
*Prayers*; Because if *they* are *sufficiently compleat*, we shall  
in *them* constantly pray against the Sins of *Pride* and *Ma-*  
*lice* in as distinct a Manner as can be ordinarily necessary  
or requisite in the publick Worship.

2. 'Tis in like Manner absurd to imagine, that *as often*  
as we pray for the *same Things*, we should still do it in  
*different Expressions* or *Words*. For indeed this in the  
Nature of the Thing is impossible to be done; since hu-  
mane



man Language will not afford an *endless Variety* of Words or Expressions to the same Purpose. And indeed if we should always when we pray for the same Things do it in *different Words*, the Expression of our Prayers could not possibly at *all Times* be proper and decent, but on the contrary must very often be unfit and unsuitable. And therefore if the publick Prayers be *always decently express'd*, we shall in *Effect* be obliged frequently to pray for the same Things in the *same Words*.

3. But the *Dissenters* may say, that though the publick Prayers as to the Matter ought not to be always entirely new, And though when we pray for the same Things it cannot be necessary that we should always do it in different Words, Yet still there may be a *reasonable Degree of Variety* both as to the *Matter* and *Words*, that may be of Use towards the publick Edification.

But what Limits and Bounds will they assign in this Case? Or what Degree of this Kind of Variety would they have in the publick Prayers? Surely they wont contend for any greater Degree of it, than can be had in a Consistency with the due Observation of the several Laws or Rules that God has given us, whether in Relation to our Duty in *general*, or in Relation to the Duty of publick Prayer in *particular*. And thus for *Instance*, Would they have us under Colour of making the publick Prayers *new* as to the Matter, neglect to make them *complete*, or omit the *mention* in them of the standing Wants and Necessities of Mankind, Or stuff them with impertinent Things, with curious and idle Speculations, or with doubtful and suspected Opinions? Or would they have us, under Pretence of expressing the Matter of our Prayers in *new Ways*,

*Ways*, neglect to express them in a decent and fit Manner? Or must we so far give Way to *Novelty* of Expression as may tend or serve to make People more affected with the *Words* of a Prayer, than with the *Matter* and *Substance* of it?

Now all that Variety of this Nature, that can be had in a Consistency with the due Observation of the several Laws or Rules that God has given us, may be had by the Use of Set-Forms. And I challenge the *Dissenters* to prove the Contrary.

But supposing for Arguments sake, that *something more* of this Kind of *Variety* were requisite than could be had by the Use of Set-Forms, yet this will not do any Harm to the main Design in Hand; I mean the proving that a Set-Form of Prayer is *expedient*; For in *such a Case*, over and besides the constant Use of a Set-Form, there might be an Allowance made for every Minister to make Use of *free* or *Extempore* Prayer in the publick Worship, in Order to have *these further Degrees* of *Variety* in the publick Prayers. And consequently all the *Help* to Devotion that may be *supposed* to arise from *them*, may be had in a Consistency with the Use of Set-Forms.

But that I may proceed,

4. The *Novelty* of a Prayer is in *it self* no Help to Devotion. For,

*First*, 'Tis plain that we may *daily* pray for the *same Things*, and yet may in our so doing pray with the truest Devotion. For I have already shewn that we are commanded by God frequently and daily to pray for the *same Things*; And if so, 'Tis absurd to say that we cannot do it with Devotion. And besides, Do not even the

*Dissenters* themselves constantly pray for the same Things in their publick Worship? Nay do not all Churches in the World do so?

Secondly, 'Tis likewise evident that we can daily or constantly pray for the *same Things* in the *very same Words* with true Devotion. For as I have already hinted, Our Prayers cannot at *all times* be decently express'd, unless we do in *Effect* frequently ask for the same Things in the same Words. Further, Did not our Saviour *in the Garden* pray thrice for the same thing in the same Words (a)? Does not the *Psalmist* thirty six times in one *Psalms* offer up the same *Thanksgiving* unto God in the same Words (b)? And does not the *Apostle Paul* frequently pronounce the same *Blessing* in the same *Words*? And let the Reader seriously consider, Whether *these* and the like Instances, be not on Purpose recorded in holy Scripture, to shew us the Vanity of those People who affect *constantly* to express their Prayers in different Words, And to suggest to us, That the offering up of the same Prayers, Praises and Thanksgivings in the same *Words* can be no Hindrance to Devotion. The 136 *Psalms* was termed by the *Jews* the *Great Hymn*; And was made use of by them in their publick Worship in the *Temple*, as well as upon many other publick Occasions: Now if there were any thing in the constant using of the same Words, as often as we pray for the same Things, that would prove a real Hindrance to Devotion, how can we imagine that the *Holy Ghost* in endicting the Words of a *Hymn*, that was to be made Use of upon the most solemn Occasions, And that would be reputed the greatest, or the most remarkable Hymn of the Church, should express the same Thing no less than thirty six Times in the same *Words*. Further.



Furthermore, do not the *Dissenters* themselves constantly offer up unto God the same *Confessions*, *Petitions*, *Intercessions*, *Praises* and *Thanksgivings* in the same Words in their singing of *Psalms*? Do not many of them pray constantly for the same Things in the same Words in their Use of the *Lord's Prayer*? And do they not *even* in their *Extempore* Prayers in Effect frequently pray for the same Things in the very same Words? And will they say that they cannot be truly devout in such Cases?

Again, those that accustom themselves to pray by Set-Forms, do find by *Experience* that they can pray in *them* with the greatest Devotion, But that they cannot generally speaking do so in *Extempore* Prayers. And is not their Experience as much to be relied on in the present Case, as the Experience of those People, who tell us, that they cannot be truly devout unless their Prayers be constantly express'd in *different Words*? 6

The *Experience* of all Mankind in Cases that are of a *parallel Nature*, may also be appeal'd to in this Case. As for *Instance*; Will it *dull* and *flatten* the Inclination of a *Hungry Child* after Meat and Drink, if he should on all proper Occasions ask for the *same Kinds of Meat* and *Drink* in the *same Words*? Or when People do frequently go to the *Shops* and *Shambles* to ask for the *same Things*, will their Desire be the *less* after *them*, if they should ordinarily make use of the *same Words* in asking of them?

But to proceed,

4. The *Novelty* in *Extempore* Prayers is so far from being a Help that generally speaking 'tis a great Hindrance to true Devotion. For 'tis plain from what has been before said, that People cannot so well join in a *new Prayer*

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or a Prayer that they *never heard before*, as they can do in *one* that they are *thoroughly and sufficiently acquainted with*. Besides, The *Affectation of Novelty*, as has been already shewn, will occasion *Positive Errors and Faults* as well as *Omissions* in the *Matter*, *Indecencies* in the *Expression*, and frequent *Disorders* in the *Method* of *Extempore Prayers*, and consequently in all these *Respects* will prove a *Hindrance to Devotion*. But the *greatest* and the most *universal Mischief* of the *Novelty* of such Prayers with *Respect* to the *Matter in Hand* seems to be, That it may *breed and nourish* a very *dangerous Disposition* in most People, whereby they will be more delighted with *Words and Phrases*, and with *useless and vain Fancies*, than with the *solid and substantial Things* of Prayer.

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## S E C T. X.

*Concerning the Tenth Rule laid down in the Introduction, viz. That publick Prayer ought in general to be so performed, as that it may be useful towards the Instruction of People in the Duties and Principles of the Christian Religion.*

**T**HAT the publick Prayers ought to be so contrived as that they may be useful towards the Instruction of People in the Principles and Duties of the Christian Religion, will be acknowledged on all Hands; For in the publick Worship all Things must be done unto *Edifying*; Which does import, the *Building of us up in Faith and Knowledge*, as well as good Works. That

That by the Use of a Set-Form the publick Prayers can be the most Useful towards the Instruction of People in the Principles and Duties of Religion in general is very plain. For,

*First*, The publick Prayers cannot be rightly instructive, unless they be plain and intelligible to People. Now I have before shewn in several Instances, that Set-Forms can generally speaking be much better understood than *Ex-tempore* Prayers.

*Secondly*, The publick Prayers cannot be rightly instructive, unless they be sound and agreeable to the Mind of God: Now I have already shewn, that in Respect of all the Parts, Properties and Circumstances of Prayer, they can be the most agreeable to the Will of God, and the most free from Faults and Errors by the Use of a Set-Form.

*Thirdly*, When Set-Forms are made Use of in the publick Worship, they may be committed to Print, And all People may be furnished with Copies of them, which cannot be supposed of *Ex-tempore* Prayers. Now a *Liturgy* or a *Book of Common Prayer*, if it be rightly contrived, will be a very good *Abstract* or *Abridgement* of the *Christian Doctrine*, And will contain in it all the necessary things of Religion. And whereas it will be always in the Hands of People, and will be constantly read by them, it cannot ordinarily be supposed that they should be ignorant of the necessary Doctrines of the Christian Faith.

*Fourthly*, By the Use of Set-Forms the necessary Articles of the *Christian Faith* will be distinctly suggested to Peoples Minds in their Repeating of the *Creed*; The



several Kinds of *Duty* and *Sin*, and of *Good* and *Evil* will be brought into their Thoughts in the offering up their *Prayers* and *Petitions*; And the several Kinds of the *Attributes* and *Works* of God will be inculcated upon their Minds, by the *Praises* and *Thanksgivings*, &c. And that *all these* can be the most distinctly and frequently suggested to them by the Use of Set-Forms, has been already shewn.

But one of the greatest Advantages of a Set-Form in this Respect is, That it can be of much greater Use towards the Instruction of People in the *Nature* and *Duty* of *private Prayer*, than the *Extempore* Way. This indeed is plain from the general Reasons already mentioned. But to be more particular,

1. Those *very Forms* that are made Use of in the publick Worship, may likewise be used by People in their *private Devotion*. And so far the *private Prayers* of Men may be as free from Corruptions and Imperfections as the *publick ones*. But it's *ordinarily speaking* impossible, that People should so distinctly remember those *Extempore* Prayers that are uttered in publick, as that they may make use of them in their *private Devotion*. Nor can it *generally* be expected, that the *Extempore* Prayers of the *Generallity* of *private Persons* should be as free from Faults and Imperfections, as *those* that are made in publick by their *Ministers*.

2. When Set-Forms are made use of in publick, there will also be in course to be had *Books* or *Forms* of *private Devotion*; And such too as may be approved of by the *Governors* and *Pastors* of the Church. Now such Forms  
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will be of great Use and Benefit to *People*. For *they* will thereby be furnished with sufficient Materials for their private Devotion; And may also be *rightly instructed* in Respect of all the *Parts, Properties* and *Circumstances* of private Prayer. And hereby the meanest Persons may pray with as much exactness, and as agreeably to the Mind of God in all Respects, allowing them Sincerity and Understanding of what they say, as the most learned Men in the World. By which Means, God in a Manner will receive Glory and a sweet Savour from the Mouths of *Babes and Sucklings*.

But when *Extempore* Prayer prevails, all *Forms* or *Books* of *private Devotion* will be but of Request. And accordingly, as far as ever I cou'd find, 'tis the universal Custom among the *Dissenters* to pray *in private* in the *Extempore* Way.

Now the *Generallity* of Men must be in a very unhappy Case, if they have no *Forms* to make Use of in their *private Devotion*; Since if they pray constantly in the *Extempore* Way, their Prayers cannot but very frequently be corrupt and defective in many Respects. For if the *Extempore* Prayers that are made by Ministers *themselves* in the publick *VVorship* cannot but frequently be Faulty and Imperfect, *much more* must those of the *Generallity* of *private Persons* be so. Since the Causes and Occasions of Corruptions and Defects, cannot generally speaking but be much greater in the one Case, than in the other.

It will be no sufficient Excuse to *palliate* the Abuses of *Extempore* Prayer in *private* to say, That *People* may do as well in the Matter as they are able. For no Man can be justly said to do all that he can do in his *Duty*, un-  
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less he rightly makes Use of *all* those ordinary Means and Helps (supposing them to be in his Power) that are necessary or useful in Order to the right Performance of it. And therefore People in *this Case* should not only do as far as rude Nature and Education will assist them, But they ought also to seek the Aid and Help of others. The *most compendious* and best way of doing *which* will be for them, to make use of such Forms and Directions about private Devotion, as their Superiors the *Governors* and *Pastors* of the Church do afford them.

From what has been said we see that *Set-Forms* are not only expedient in *publick* but also in *private Worship*, and especially *that* of *Families*. And indeed, generally speaking, the most of the Arguments that have been made Use of in the foregoing Discourse, to prove the *great Expediency* of *them* in the *one Case*, will also prove the *great Usefulness* of *them* in the *other*.

But there are some *special Hindrances* to Devotion that a Man will be liable unto, when he does *himself* pray in the *Extempore* Way, Especially when he does it *before* others, That he wont be liable unto when he prays by *Set-Forms*, which it may be proper briefly to hint at in this Place. And thus for Instance,

When a Person prays *Extempore*, he must employ himself in *recollecting* those Things that he intended before Hand to Utter; He must consider in what *Method* and *Order* to put them; And after what *Manner* he must express them. And when he is at a *Loss*, or his Memory fails him, he must rake his *Invention* for *new Matter* of Prayer: And till *such Matter* do's come into his Head, he will be oblig'd to *enlarge* on those things that are *at Hand*: And  
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in such Enlargements he cannot but often *ſpeak without Thinking*; Becauſe in ſuch Caſes, his Mind muſt be ſo much employed with conſidering what he ſhall *next* ſay, that he cannot have ſufficient Time to think upon that which for the *preſent* he does utter. And when he apprehends any Thing to be by him too *unadviſedly and unfitly* ſpoken, he will be ready to be *daſh'd*, And to *dwell* in his Mind upon the Thoughts of it. And certainly *all this put together* muſt ordinarily prove a very great Hindrance to Devotion.

## S E C T. XI.

## Objections Answered.

Obj. I. **T**HE *Differents* may ſay, that they find by Experience that they are more devout when they join in *Extempore Prayers*, than when they pray by *Set-Forms*. And that therefore the *Extempore* Way of Prayer, and not Prayer by a *Set-Form*, muſt be expedient in the publick Worſhip: Now in Answer to this.

I. 'Tis plain that a Man through *Prejudice* and *Custom* may think himſelf to be *truly devout*, when he may not be ſo at all, or when he may be only devout in a *very imperfect Degree*. And thus the moſt extravagant *Seſtaries*, will be confident enough to imagine themſelves the *moſt devout* and *edified* in their own Ways of Worſhip; When in the Mean Time they may miſtake, the *Heat* or *Warmth* of their Conſtitution, or ſome *mechanical Operations* of the

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Body for true Devotion. Since therefore Men are so liable to err and mistake in this Matter, it will lye upon them to examine *narrowly* their *several Ways* of Worship, And to see whether their *Devotion* in *them* be grounded upon good Reason; For *otherwise* their confident Preferences to *it* will serve but to very little Purpose. Now the *Dissenters* can give no manner of Reason why they can be more devout in the Use of *Extempore* Prayers than in the Use of Set-Forms; Whereas we can give very solid and substantial Reasons why we are more edified by Set-Forms than *Extempore* Prayers, as the Reader may be satisfied from the *foregoing Discourse*.

2. We may further Remark, that through *Prejudice* and *Education*, Mens *Judgments* and *Apprehensions* of Things may be so *vitiating* and *corrupted*, that they cannot be so much edified and affected with the *most pure* and *perfect Ways* of Worship, as they may be with *those* that are *corrupt* and *faulty* in many Respects. And upon this Account it is, that Men are more ready to be moved and affected with those *VVays* of *VVorship* (whatever they be) that they have been accustom'd to and train'd up in, than with any others.

3. Supposing therefore that the *Dissenters* do find themselves more devout in the Use of *Extempore* Prayers than they are when they pray by Set-Forms, Yet 'twill in no wise follow from *thence*, that a Set-Form is *inexpedient* in the *publick Worship*. For indeed upon the like Foot, they must *themselves* grant that *Extempore* Prayer is *inexpedient*; Since the greater Part of Mankind do find by Experience (and *such too* as is grounded upon good Reason) that they can be more devout in the Use of Set-Forms than of *Extempore* Prayers.

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4. But the *Dissenters* may say, Since they do find by Experience that they are the most devout and affected with the *Extempore* Way, is it not expedient that at least they themselves should make Use of it?

But to this I Answer,

That that Way of Prayer is the most expedient for every Man to make Use of; whereby the Laws and Rules that are laid down in Holy Scripture concerning Prayer can be the best observ'd in the *Truth* and *Nature* of the Thing. Now I have already shewn that *these* Laws or Rules can be much the best observ'd in the *Truth* and *Nature* of the Thing by the Use of a Set-Form. And therefore it will lye upon the *Dissenters* to throw off their groundless Prejudices in *this* Case, And to accustom themselves to the Use of Set-Forms; Since if they would do so, they could be much more devout and affected than otherwise they can be, And could also abundantly better observe all the Laws or Rules that God has given us concerning publick Prayer.

I shall only further add upon this Head, That if every Man's *Fancy*, or what he may call *Experience* be once admitted, to be the *Test* of what's *Expedient*, and what's not, Then there will be an End to all *Order* and *Uniformity* in the publick Worship; Then it will be impossible that one *Visible Communion* among *Christians* should ever be attain'd; But on the *Contrary*, there must in all Probability, be as many different Ways of Worship, as there are Men of different Humours and Sentiments; Then will the worst of *Sectaries* be shelter'd and confirm'd in the *grossest* Prejudices against a pure and reasonable Way of Worship; And such a Handle will be given them, that  
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'twill be impossible by Reason or Argument to convince them of their Errors and Mistakes.

*Obj. II. If a Set-Form of Prayer be expedient, why not also a Set-Form of Preaching?*

*Answer.* Let the *Dissenters* tell us of as many *parallel Cases* as they please, if the Duty of publick Prayer can to all *Intents* and *Purposes* be better perform'd by the Use of a Set-Form, than it can be when we pray altogether without one, it must be allowed that a Set-Form is expedient in the publick VVorship. And let Mens Prejudices and Opinions be what they will, if the *Laws or Rules that God has given us concerning Preaching*, or the publick *Instruction of Christians*, can be better observed by the Use of a Set-Form of Preaching, than they can be without it, such a Form likewise (for there is no Help for it) must be allowed to be expedient in the publick Worship.

But the *parallel* between *Prayer* and *Preaching* will not hold in several *Respects*: And at least there seems to be much greater necessity for a Form of Prayer, than a Form of Preaching. And thus for Instance,

Every Man is to *join* in the publick Prayers, and to make them his *own Act and Deed*, Whereas Preaching is only the *Personal Act* of the Minister. Now it may be very proper and requisite, in a *joint Act of Address* to make Use of a Form, whereas it may not be requisite, or at least not near so expedient to make Use of one in the *single Address* of one Person. And thus for *Example*, when the *Parliament* do's Address the *Prince*, it may be very convenient that a Form shou'd be drawn up for that Purpose; To the End that they may all the better approve of it, and join in it: Whereas if one Person *only* were to  
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make an Address, there would not be the like Necessity for him to take such a Course.

And *besides*, an *Error* may be much better dispensed with in a *Sermon* that is only the *Personal Act* of the Minister, and wherein the People are principally to act the Part of *Hearers* and *Judges*, than in the publick Prayers wherein all Men are so *nearly* concern'd, as that they are to join in them *themselves*, and offer them unto God in their *own Persons*. For the *joint Acts* of the *Christian Church* or *Society*, especially when they are tendered unto Almighty God, ought in Reason to be as perfect and as free from Errors as the whole Society can make them; Whereas, it cannot reasonably be expected that the *personal Acts* of *particular Members* should be perfect in so great a Degree.

Furthermore, there is a great Difference to be made between *making our Addresses unto God*, And *speaking to our Fellow Creatures*. We are not oblig'd to that Care and Exactness in the one Case, as in the other. And an Error in our Prayers unto God seems to be of a much more heinous Nature, than in our Discourses to our Fellow Creatures.

It may suffice at present to have said so far in Reference to this *Objection*; Because I may have Occasion hereafter in some other *Discourse* more fully and distinctly to consider it.

## The Conclusion.

**A**ND now to Sum up all that has been said in a Word; We see, that *the Laws or Rules that God has given us concerning publick Prayer, can be much better observ'd by the Use of a Set-Form, than they can be when we pray without one, or pray altogether in the Free or Extempore Way.* And I have further shewn, by *particular Instances, that these Rules are in Fact better observ'd in the publick Worship of our Church, than they are in that of the Dissenters.* It must therefore be allowed, That *a Set-Form and Rule of Prayer, is highly expedient, if not necessary in the publick Worship.*

I shall conclude with Exhorting the *Dissenters* to lay aside their Prejudices against *Set-Forms*, And not to abstain any longer from the publick Worship of our Church upon the Account of *them.* And if they shall think it fit for other Reasons to continue still in their *Separation*, Yet let them at least *introduce Set-Forms* into their *own Worship.*

It is laid down as a Principle in their larger Catechism, That *the Law of God requires the ut-*  
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*most Perfection in every Duty, and forbids the least Degree of every Sin : And if so, it is incumbent upon them to make Use of Set-Forms; Since as we have shewn, the Duty of publick Prayer can to all Intents and Purposes be much-more perfectly perform'd by the Use of a Set-Form, than it can be without it. And besides, I am perswaded that if a Liturgy of Prayers were constantly made Use of in all their Congregations, it would be a great Means to put an End to our present Divisions; Since their Extempore Way of Worship seems to be the main Thing, that has drawn the Generality of their People from the Communion of our Church.*

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most Perfection in every Day, and forbid the least  
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F I N I S.